

**ANNE'S  
TERRIBLE  
GOOD  
NATURE**

**AND OTHER STORIES  
E·V·LUCAS**

F.D.B.

C957965

## ANNE'S TERRIBLE GOOD NATURE

OTHER BOOKS FOR CHILDREN  
BY THE SAME AUTHOR

A BOOK OF VERSES FOR CHILDREN  
ANOTHER BOOK OF VERSES FOR  
CHILDREN

THE FLAMP

THE AMELIORATOR

THE SCHOOLBOY'S APPRENTICE  
OLD-FASHIONED TALES

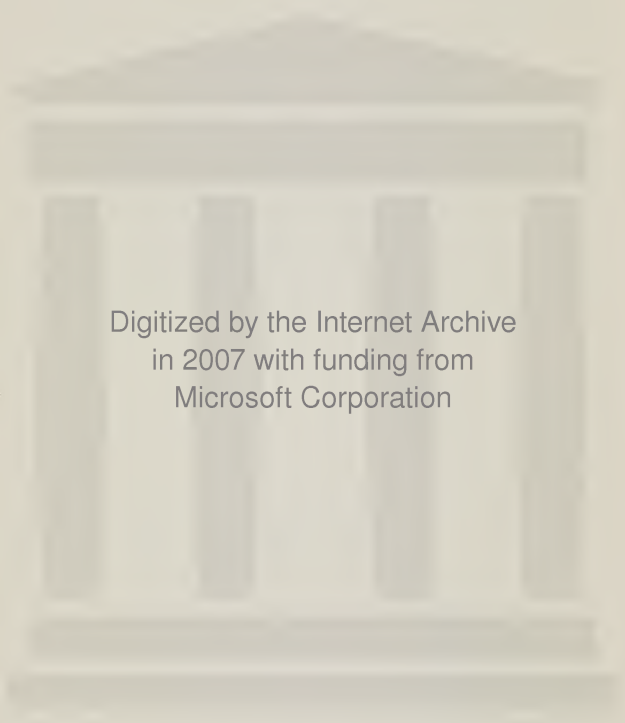
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THREE HUNDRED GAMES AND  
PASTIMES

RUNAWAYS AND CASTAWAYS

THE "ORIGINAL POEMS" OF ANN  
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TO THE OLD WOMAN'S INTENSE ASTONISHMENT, SHE GAVE HER ONE  
HUNDRED AND FOUR OF HER THREEPENNY BITS. [p. 42

# ANNE'S TERRIBLE GOOD NATURE

AND OTHER STORIES FOR CHILDREN

BY

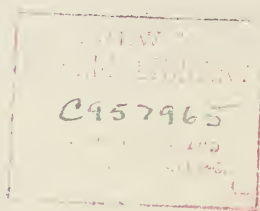
E. V. LUCAS

WITH 12 ILLUSTRATIONS  
BY A. H. BUCKLAND

NEW YORK  
PUBLIC  
NEW YORK

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

*First published, August 1908; Reprinted December 1908,  
July 1911, March 1915, December 1919,  
June 1923, December 1924,  
and January 1928.*



ROY W. B.  
C. 457965  
V. 1. 1. 1.

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## PREFACE

OF the eleven stories in this book, seven now appear for the first time. For permission to reprint "Sir Franklin and the Little Mothers," I have to thank Messrs. Bradbury, Agnew & Co.; and Messrs. George Allen & Sons allow me to include "The Miss Bannisters' Brother." "The Monkey's Revenge" was printed first in Messrs. Dent's *Christmas Treasury*, and "The Anti-burglars" in *The Woman at Home* for December 1902. The motive of the title story was given to me by Mrs. Charles Bryant, and that of "The Ring of Fortitude" by Mrs. W. M. Meredith. The

suggestion as to organs and street cries in "The Notice-Board" was made to me by Oxford's Professor of Poetry. The autobiographies of coins, I might add, are a commonplace in old books for children ; but one is at liberty, I think, to adapt the idea to one's own time without being guilty of very serious want of originality.

E. V. L.

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
ANNE'S TERRIBLE GOOD NATURE . . .	1
THE THOUSAND THREEPENNY BITS . . .	27
RODERICK'S PROS. . . . .	55
THE MONKEY'S REVENGE . . . . .	73
THE NOTICE-BOARD . . . . .	87
THE MISS BANNISTERS' BROTHER . . .	109
THE ANTI-BURGLARS . . . . .	143
SIR FRANKLIN AND THE LITTLE MOTHERS .	169
THE GARDENS AND THE NILE . . . . .	203
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SHILLING . .	217
THE RING OF FORTITUDE . . . . .	237

# ILLUSTRATIONS

	TO FACE	PAGE
TO THE OLD WOMAN'S INTENSE ASTONISHMENT, SHE GAVE HER ONE HUNDRED AND FOUR OF HER THREEPENNY BITS - <i>frontispiece</i>		
"PLEASE DON'T TROUBLE TO GO BACK. I'LL LEND YOU THE CUPS AND SAUCERS" - -		19
THESE TOMMY CATHCART AND SHE SLIPPED INTO THE HANDS OF THE SANDWICH-MEN -		44
THE PRESENCE OF SO SMALL A CRICKETER MADE A GREAT SENSATION AMONG THE PORTERS -		64
"DO LOOK AT THAT QUEER LITTLE MAN!" -		80
"WE HAD IT MADE ON PURPOSE" - -		103
THERE WAS CHRISTINA - - - -		114
WHILE MARY HELD THE LANTERN, HE WORKED AWAY AT THE FASTENINGS - - -		162
A LITTLE PROCESSION PASSED THE DOORWAY -		181
"YES, NURSE, BUT DO TELL ME WHAT SPEKE DID?" - - - - -		206
"A BLUE RIBBON WAS THREADED THROUGH ME, AND I WAS HUNG ROUND A LITTLE GIRL'S NECK" - - - - -		229
"WILL YOU TELL ME WHAT MR. DEAR IS LIKE?"		255

ANNE'S TERRIBLE GOOD  
NATURE



## ANNE'S TERRIBLE GOOD NATURE

ONCE upon a time there was a little girl named Anne Wilbraham Bayes, Wilbraham being after her grandfather on the mother's side, a very clever gentleman living at Great Malvern, and writing books on Roman history, who has, however, nothing whatever to do with this story. This story is about Anne and her perfectly appalling good nature.

Where Anne's good nature came from no one ever could guess, for her father had little enough, always insisting on silence at breakfast while he read the paper and ate the biggest egg; and her mother had little enough, too, never seeing her children without being reminded of something

which she wanted from the top left-hand drawer in her bedroom ; while Anne's brothers and sisters had so little that they always forced Anne to be the one who should go on these boring errands. And so far as I have been able to discover, none of Anne's grandparents were particularly good-natured either, for old Mr. Bayes had a barbed-wire fence all round his estate in west Surrey, near Farnborough, and old Mrs. Bayes would not allow any fruit to be picked except by the gardeners ; while old Mr. Wilbraham, in consequence of writing his Roman history all day long, insisted on perfect quietness, so that whenever the children were at Great Malvern they had to play only at those games with no noise in them, which are hardly worth calling games at all ; and as for old Mrs. Wilbraham, she was dead. It looks, therefore, very much as if Anne either inherited her wonderful and embarrassing good nature from a distant ancestor too far back

to be inquired into, or that it was a totally new kind, beginning with herself. For she would do the most dreadful things—things to make the hair of ordinarily good-natured people stand on end.

For instance, this is what she did once. She heard her mother complain to a visitor one January afternoon that there were no flowers in the garden at that time of year, and it made the view from the sitting-room window very depressing. After lying awake most of the night thinking how she might improve this view and make it more cheerful for her mother's eyes, Anne got up very early, while it was still dark, and went to the conservatory, and chose from it by candlelight a number of gay flowers, and these she carefully planted in the bed just in front of her mother's window. It was raining a little, and bitterly cold, and Anne's fingers became numb, and her feet like stones, and her nose pink, but she went right through

## 6 ANNE'S TERRIBLE GOOD NATURE

with it without faltering until the bed was as gay as summer.

That was good nature, if you like, but no one seemed to think so. Mrs. Bayes, when she looked out of the window, instead of being cheered, screamed out "Oh !" and sent for her smelling salts, and then became quite tearful over the ruin of her pet geraniums, freesias, carnations, cyclamens, and genistas. Mr. Bayes was perfectly furious, and said so several times in different ways, each more cutting than the last ; while Anne's brothers and sisters thought it the greatest joke against Anne possible.

"You didn't really think they'd live, did you ?" they asked her. "How absolutely dotty !"

Directly after breakfast the gardener dug them all up again and put them back in their hot-house pots. Anne was not punished for her folly in any other way than by want of appreciation ; but if any

one had seen her crying by herself in her bedroom they might have thought that she had been.

However, when Valentine's Day came round, which was about three weeks later, and all the little Bayeses found a parcel on their plates at breakfast — their Aunt Margaret being one of those few eccentric persons left who remember St. Valentine's Day—Anne's package was found to be twice as good as any of the others, containing as it did not only the ordinary present, but a gold bangle as well, with a little piece of blue turquoise hanging from it (from Liberty's probably), and this inscription on a tiny label: "From St. Valentine to the little girl who tried to make her mother's garden bright in winter and was only laughed at and chidden for her pains."

So Anne really scored, you see ; but, of course, it was a ridiculous thing to do, wasn't it ? Just think of supposing that

hot-house flowers would grow out of doors in January! It shows how perfectly absurd Anne's good nature could be.

That is one case. Now I will tell you of another.

One day the whole Bayes family were going to London—they lived near Leatherhead—for the day. They were going to Cousin Alice's wedding in the morning, and afterwards to the Hippodrome matinée. Marceline, it is true, was not there any longer, but it was a wonderful programme, Mr. Bayes said, and they were all immensely excited. Besides, they had bunches of flowers to throw at the bride, rice having now gone out on account of its being dangerous for the eyes and very smartful generally.

The train was full, but Mr. Bayes, by mentioning the fact overnight, had had a third-class compartment guarded for him by a porter, and into this they all climbed: Mr. Bayes, Mrs. Bayes, Arthur Lloyd

Bayes, Gerald Gilmer Bayes, Marion Lease Bayes, Meta Cleghorn Bayes, and Anne Wilbraham Bayes. There were also two friends from Leatherhead who knew Cousin Alice, making nine in all.

Anne sat next the window, on the platform side.

All went well until the train drew up at the next station, but there an unfortunate thing happened. Scores of people were waiting to get in, and they began to push round the third-class carriage doors. Several came to the Bayeses' compartment, but, seeing that it was all one family in their best clothes, they had consideration and passed on.

Gradually every one found a seat, either in the thirds or the seconds, and even the first—all except a poor shabby old woman in a shawl, with a big basket, who tottered piteously up and down trying in vain to find a place. Anne saw her pass and peer into their carriage with an anxious and

even tearful look, but Mr. Bayes frowned so forbiddingly that she hurried on.

At this moment Anne's terrible good nature overpowered her, and she leaned out of the window and cried invitingly : "Come in here—quick! There's room for one."

"Nonsense," said Mr. Bayes ; "it's full."

"Oh no," said Anne—"look! It says, 'To seat five persons on each side,' and we're only nine altogether. Come in here," she cried again to the old woman.

"But she's dirty," said Mrs. Bayes ; "she'll spoil your frocks."

"Very likely got something catching," said Mr. Bayes.

"What a rotter you are, Anne!" said the others.

But meanwhile a porter had opened the door and pushed the old woman in. Anne stood up to give her her place ; the others moved to the other end ; and Mr. Bayes,

who, after all, was a very good father and exceedingly keen about health, let down the window with a bang and hid behind his paper.

"I'm sure," said the old woman to Anne, "I'm very much obliged to you, missy."

She got out at the next station, and as she did so she handed Anne a little paper article from her basket, for she was a pedlar, and said it was a present for her for being so good-natured; and so saying she hobbled off, and Mr. Bayes blew hard through his lips, as if he had come up from a long dive, and Mrs. Bayes made the children smell at her salts.

When Anne looked at her present she found it was a halfpenny row of pins, and this made every one laugh and quite happy again. Anne put them in her pocket and laughed too, although how she could find it in her heart to laugh, after ruining the railway journey like that by her un-

fortunate trick of good nature, I can't think.

The wedding was a great success until Cousin Alice, the bride—and a very pretty bride too—was coming down the aisle on Captain Vernon's arm (and the Captain looked every inch a soldier, and had across his forehead the nicest brown line, which he had brought back with him from Egypt, where he had been on duty before he hurried home to marry Cousin Alice); all went well until a silly boy, in his desire to cross the church and get to the door first and begin to throw confetti, stepped on Cousin Alice's beautiful white satin train and tore a yard or two nearly off.

She was as sweet about it as only Cousin Alice could be, but she stopped and picked it up, and looked round imploringly for help. And then happened that which I need hardly tell you, for you have guessed it already. The only person that had any pins was Anne, who stepped out of her

pew and handed her little halfpenny row to Captain Vernon; and there and then, several people helping, the beautiful white satin train was made all right again, at least for the time being, and the bride and bridegroom walked on, smiling to right and left, and ducked their heads outside as the flowers and confetti rained on them, and got into the brougham, and the coachman cracked his whip with the white rosette on it, and they were driven to Uncle Maurice's house, where Cousin Alice used to live, but where she would now live no more.

After a while the Bayes family, with many other guests, arrived there too, to stay for a few minutes to see the presents and say good-bye to the bride. It was a morning wedding, because they were going on a very long journey.

When Anne came at last face to face with Cousin Alice and Captain Vernon, Captain Vernon, who had suddenly become Cousin

Phil, took out of his pocket a piece of money, and, holding it tight in his hand, said to Anne : " I owe you this."

" Oh no," said Anne, " you don't. How could you ?"

" How could I ?" said Cousin Phil. " Why, I bought a row of pins from you this morning."

" Oh no !" said Anne again. " I was very glad to have them for Cousin Alice to use."

" You may say what you like, Anne," said Cousin Phil, " but I consider that you sold them to me, and I intend to pay for them ; and here you are, and you shall give me a receipt for it." And so saying, he stooped down, and Anne kissed him, and he kissed Anne ; and then Cousin Alice kissed Anne and Anne kissed Cousin Alice ; and then other people pressed forward and Anne walked away. And when she looked at the piece of money in her hand it was a sovereign.

All's well that ends well, says Shakespeare, but of course it was very unwise and very unnecessary of Anne to have leaned out of the window of that nice clean family compartment and invited into it a dirty old pedlar woman, even if she was very infirm and unhappy and there was no room anywhere else. We must, as Mr. Bayes remarked on the way home—his words not very clear by reason of his eating all the time one of the chocolate creams which Anne had bought with part of her sovereign for the family at the Hippodrome. “We must,” said Mr. Bayes—and the others all agreed with him—“we must, dear Anne, be a little careful how we exercise even so amiable a quality as kindness of heart. I am very glad to see you always so ready to be nice and helpful to others, but your brain has been given you to a large extent to control your impulses. Never forget that.”

Here Mr. Bayes took another chocolate, and very soon afterwards their station was reached.

But did Anne profit by her father's excellent advice? We shall soon see, for now I come to the worst adventure into which her terrible good nature has ever led her.

You must know that the Bayeses were not rich, although they had rich relations and really never wanted for anything. But they lived on as little as possible, and on two or three mornings every week Mr. Bayes, after reading his letters, would remark that all his investments were going wrong and they would soon be in the workhouse. That was, of course, only his way; but they could not have many treats, or many visitors, and it caused them to look with very longing eyes on the young Calderons, the children of the gentleman that had taken the Hall, the great house near by, for August and

September, who used to gallop by on their ponies, and play golf and cricket in their park, and who never seemed to want for anything.

To know the Calderon family was the Bayeses' great desire, but their mother explained that it would not be right to call on strangers staying for so short a time, and nothing therefore could be done : which was particularly trying because, owing to the absence of something called dividends, the visit to Sea View, said Mr. Bayes, was this year an impossibility.

Such was the state of affairs on the morning of August 21, when Anne was working in her garden just under the wall which separated Mr. Bayes's property from the high road. She was steadily pulling up weeds after the rain, and thinking how nice the sun made the earth smell, when she heard the beating of hoofs, and the scrunching of wheels on the road,

and a murmur of happy voices young and old. And then she heard a man's voice call out "Stop!" and the horses were pulled up.

"What is it, father?" she heard a girl's voice say.

And then the man's voice replied, "We shall have to go back. I've just remembered that no cups and saucers were put in."

"Oh no, don't let's go back," said one child's voice after another. "It's so hot, and it doesn't really matter. We can drink out of the glasses."

"No," said the father's voice again, "we must go back. You forget that the Richardsons are going to meet us there, and they will want tea and want it properly served. We must have at least six cups and saucers. Turn round, John!"

By this time, Anne, who had been struggling to set a ladder against the wall, had got it to stand still and climbed to the top,





"PLEASE DON'T TROUBLE TO GO BACK. I'LL LEND YOU THE  
CUPS AND SAUCERS."

and just as John began to turn the horses of the carriage she called out :

“ Please don't trouble to go back. I'll lend you the cups and saucers. I won't be gone a minute ” ; and before anyone could reply she was down the ladder and running to the house.

Perhaps if she had not been in such a hurry, and had not been so genuinely troubled to think of the picnic party spoiling their pleasure by going back to the Hall (a horrid thing to do, as Anne remembered, after leaving it so gaily), she would have asked herself several questions—such as, “ What right have I to offer to lend strangers cups and saucers belonging to my parents ? ” and “ Is my head properly controlling my impulse ? ” and so forth. But Anne had no time for inquiries like that : all she could think of was getting the cups and saucers as soon as possible, and returning with them so as to save those nice picnic people from having to go back again.

Just before she reached the house, however, she remembered that old Martha, the cook, was in a very bad temper that morning, and would certainly refuse to give them up; but Anne also remembered at the same instant that there was in the drawing-room a cabinet full of cups and saucers, which no one ever used, but which now and then a visitor took out and examined underneath, and she decided to take six of these instead—so hastily seizing a basket from a hook in the hall she took what she wanted from the cabinet and ran back panting to the gate leading to the road.

To her immense delight the carriage was still standing there, and she hastened to hand the basket to the gentleman who was waiting in the road to receive it.

“Well, you are a little brick,” he said, “and how hot it has made you.”

Anne gasped out something in reply, but not at all comfortably, because for one

thing she was out of breath, and for another the children in the carriage were all looking at her very hard. But at this moment the gentleman, who had been examining the basket, gave a low whistle and then called to one of the ladies to come and speak to him. She got out of the carriage and walked a little way apart with the gentleman, who showed her something in the basket and talked very earnestly. Then all of a sudden he called to the children to get out and play for a little while until he and their mother came back, and taking Anne's hand he asked her if she would lead him and his wife to her mother, as he had something to say to her, and they all three went off through the gate to the house.

The gentleman talked gaily as they went, and the lady held Anne's other hand very softly, and so they came to Mr. Bayes's study, where he was writing, Mrs. Bayes and the other children being in

Leatherhead shopping. The gentleman and Mr. Bayes then talked together, while Anne led the lady about the garden until she was suddenly sent for to change her clothes—why, you shall hear.

What happened at the interview between Mr. Bayes and the gentleman can best be told by repeating the conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Bayes and the children at lunch.

“But where’s Anne?” said Mrs. Bayes, as the servant removed the cover from the joint.

“Anne,” said Mr. Bayes, “Anne? Oh, yes, Anne has gone for a picnic.”

“For a picnic!” cried the whole family.

“Yes,” said Mr. Bayes, “for a picnic with the people staying at the Hall.”

Mrs. Bayes sat back with a gasp, and the children’s mouths opened so wide you could have posted letters in them.

“Yes,” said Mr. Bayes. “She was

working in her garden when she heard Mr. Calderon order the driver to go back because cups and saucers had been forgotten. He is a very nice fellow, by the way. I find we were at Oxford together, although I did not know him there, but he has been intimate with Charley for years. It is the same Calderon, the architect, that built your uncle's house at Chichester."

"Do go on, father," said the children.

"Well," said Mr. Bayes, "what does that little duffing Anne do but sing out that they were not to go back, but wait a minute, and she would lend them the cups and saucers."

"Yes, yes, go on !"

"Well, and fearing that Martha—very properly—wouldn't let her have any for the party, what does she do but take six of the very best of my Crown Derby from the cabinet in the drawing-room and scamper back with them !"

"My love," said Mrs. Bayes, "the

Crown Derby that Uncle Mortimer left us ?”

“ Yes, the Crown Derby, valued only a month ago at two guineas apiece. Off she runs with it in a basket and hands it over to Mr. or Mrs. Calderon. Mrs. Calderon, by the way, I like. She wants you to call. I said you'd go to-morrow.”

“ Do go on, father !”

“ Well, where was I ? Oh yes. The Calderons no sooner saw the china than they realized what had happened, and brought it back to me. By a miracle there wasn't a chip on it. Of course, I said I was very much obliged to them, and I offered some ordinary crockery, but Calderon said they would take it only on condition that Anne accompanied it in the capacity of caretaker and brought it back. So she went.”

“ I hope she changed her frock,” said Mrs. Bayes.

"I believe she did," said Mr. Bayes. "They've gone to Chidley Woods, where the Richardsons will meet them, and they won't be back till six. Now perhaps I may get on with my lunch."

By the following Saturday evening, I may add, the Bayes children and the Calderon children were very friendly, and Arthur Lloyd Bayes had fallen off Harold Armiger Calderon's pony twice.



THE THOUSAND THREEPENNY  
BITS



## THE THOUSAND THREEPENNY BITS

### I

ONCE upon a time there was a little girl named Alison Muirhead, and she had a doll named Rosamund and a dog named Thomson. The dog was an Aberdeen terrier, and he came from Aberdeen by train in the care of the guard, and he rarely did what he was told, which is the way of Aberdeens, as you have perhaps discovered.

Alison used to take her doll and Thomson every day into Kensington Gardens, and when they were well inside the Gardens, opposite the tulips and the new statue of William III., she used to unclasp the catch of Thomson's lead and let him run, doing her best to keep an eye on him.

This was not easy, for Thomson was a sociable dog, and he rushed after every other dog he saw, and either told them the latest dog joke or heard it, and Alison was often in despair to get him back.

If, however, Thomson had been an angel of a dog this story would never have been written, because it was wholly owing to his naughtiness that Alison and the Old Gentleman met.

The Old Gentleman used also to go into the Gardens on every fine day and sit on one of the seats by the may-trees between the long bulb walk and the Round Pond, with his back to the Albert Memorial. Not that he was one of those persons who always click their tongues when the Albert Memorial is mentioned, for, as a matter of fact, he did not mind the gold on it at all, and he really liked the groups of Asia and Europe and India at the corners, with the nice friendly elephant and camel in them; but he

turned his back on the Memorial because the seat was set that way, and he liked also, when he raised his eyes from his book, to see so much green grass, and in the distance the yachtsmen running round the Round Pond to prevent their vessels wrecking themselves on the cement.

Alison had noticed the Old Gentleman for a long time before they had become acquainted, and he had noticed her, and was much attracted by her quiet little ways with Rosamund, and her calm, if despairing, pursuit of Thomson; and he liked her, too, for never playing diablo.

But it was not until one day that Thomson broke loose at the very gate of the Gardens with his lead still on him, and in course of time ran right under the Old Gentleman's legs and caught the chain in one of the eyelet flaps of his laced boots, that Alison and he came to speak.

"Ha, ha!" said the Old Gentleman to Thomson, "I've got you now. And I

shall hold you tight till your mistress comes."

Alison was still a long way off. Thomson said nothing, but tugged at the chain.

"I've been watching you for a long time, Mr. Thomson," said the Old Gentleman, "and I have come to the conclusion that you are a bad dog. You don't care for anyone. You do what you want to do and nothing else." Thomson lay down and put out a yard and a half of pink tongue. Alison came nearer.

"If you were my dog," the Old Gentleman continued, "do you know what I should do? I should thrash you." Thomson began to snore.

Alison at this point came up, and Thomson sprang to his feet and affected to be pleased to see her.

"Thank you ever so much," Alison said to the Old Gentleman. "But how ever did you catch him?"

“I didn’t catch him,” said the Old Gentleman, “he caught me. Come and sit down and rest yourself.”

So Alison sat down, and Thomson laid his wicked cheek against her boot, and that was the beginning of the acquaintance.

The next day when she went into the Gardens Alison looked for the Old Gentleman, and sure enough there he was, and seeing there was no one beside him, she sat down there again. And for a little while on every fine day she sat with him and they talked of various things. He was very interesting: he knew a great deal about birds and flowers and foreign countries. He had not only lived in China, but had explored the Amazon. On his watch chain was a blue stone which an Indian snake-charmer had given him. But he lived now in the big hotel at the corner of the Gardens and all his wanderings were over.

The funniest thing about him was his name. Alison did not learn what it was for a long time, but one day as she was calling "Thomson ! Thomson !" very loudly as they sat there, the Old Gentleman said, "When you do that it makes me nervous."

"Why?" Alison asked.

"Because," the Old Gentleman said, "my name's Thomson too."

"Oh, I'm so sorry," Alison said, "I must call Thomson—I mean my dog—something else. I can't ever call him Thomson again."

"Why not?" said the Old Gentleman. "It doesn't matter at all. I can't expect to be the only Thomson in the world."

"Oh yes," said Alison, "I shall."

The next day the first thing she did when she saw the Old Gentleman was to tell him she had changed Thom—the dog's name. "In future," she said, "he is to be called Jimmie."

The Old Gentleman laughed. "That's my name too," he said.

## II

One day the Old Gentleman was not in his accustomed place; and it was a very fine day too. Alison was disappointed, and even Thomson, I mean Jimmie, I mean the Aberdeen terrier, seemed to miss something.

And the next day he was not there.

And the next.

And then came Sunday, when Alison went to church, and afterwards for a rather dull walk with her father, strictly on the paths, past "Physical Energy" to the Serpentine, to look at the peacocks, and then back again by the Albert Memorial, and so home. Monday and Tuesday were both wet, and on Wednesday it was a whole week since Alison had seen the Old

Gentleman ; but to her grief he was again absent.

And so, having her mother's permission, the next day she called at the hotel. She had the greatest difficulty in getting in because it was the first time that either she or her dog had ever been through a revolving door ; but at last they came safely into the hall into the presence of a tall porter in a uniform of splendour.

"Can you tell me if Mr. James Thomson is still staying here ?" Alison asked.

"I am sorry to say, Missie," replied the porter, "that Mr. Thomson died last week."

Poor Alison. . . .

### III

One morning, some few weeks afterwards, Alison found on her plate a letter addressed to herself in a strange handwriting. After wondering about it for

some moments, she opened it. The letter ran thus :

*“ Re Mr. James Thomson, deceased.*

*“ To MISS ALISON MUIRHEAD.*

*“ DEAR MADAM,*

*“ We beg to inform you that, in accordance with the last will and testament of our client, the late Mr. James Thomson, there lies at our office a packet containing a thousand threepenny bits, being a legacy which he devised to yourself, free of duty, in a codicil added a few days before his death. We should state that, by the terms of the bequest, it was our client’s wish that five hundred of the threepenny bits should be spent by you for others within a year of its receipt, and not put away against a maturer age; the remaining five hundred he wished to be spent by yourself, for yourself, and for yourself alone, also within the year. The parcel is*

at your service whenever it is convenient to you to call for it.

“We are, dear madam,

“Yours faithfully,

“LEE, LEE AND LEE.”

Alison was too bewildered to take it all in on the first reading, and her father therefore read it again and explained some of the words, which perhaps your father will do for you.

But if Alison was bewildered, it was nothing to her mother's state, which was one of amazement and pride too.

“To think of it !” she cried.

“Well, I never heard of such a thing in my life !” she said.

“It's like something in a book or a play !” she exclaimed.

“A thousand threepenny bits ! Why, that's—let me see—yes, it's—why, it's twelve pounds ten,” she remarked.

As for Mr. Muirhead, he was pleased

too; but him it seemed to amuse more than surprise.

"After your lessons this morning," he said, "instead of going for a walk you can come into the city to me, and we'll go to the lawyers' together, and then have lunch at Birch's."

When they reached the lawyers' office Alison and her father were shown into a large room with three grave gentlemen in it, whom Alison supposed were Lee, Lee and Lee; and all the time that her father was talking to them she wondered which was *the* Lee, and which was the second Lee, and which was "and Lee." Then she had to sign a paper, and then one of the Lees gave her a canvas bag containing a thousand threepenny bits.

"Of course you would like to count them," he said; and Alison replied, "Yes," at which every one laughed, because Mr. Lee had meant it for a joke and Alison had taken it seriously. But how could

she expect that Mr. Thomson's lawyer, or, indeed, any lawyer of a dead friend, would make a joke ?

"I'm afraid," said Mr. Lee, when they had done laughing "that you would be very tired of the job before you were half-way through it. Count them when you get home, and if there is any mistake we will put it right; but one of our most careful clerks has already gone through them very thoroughly."

Then they all shook hands, and each of the three Lees said something playful.

'The one that Alison guessed was Lee said, "Don't be extravagant and buy the moon."

The one that Alison guessed was the second Lee said, "If at any time you get tired of so much money, we shall be pleased to have it again."

While "and Lee" looked very solemn, and said, "Now you can go to church a thousand times."

Then they all laughed again, and Alison and her father were shown out into the street by a little sharp boy, whose eyes were fixed so keenly on the canvas bag that Alison was quite certain that he was the most careful clerk who had done the counting.

After they had been to lunch at Birch's, where they had mock turtle soup and oyster patties, they went home, and Alison poured all the threepenny bits into a depression in a cushion from the sofa, and counted them into a hundred piles of ten each. Then she got a wooden writing-desk, which had been given her by her grandmother, and emptied out all the treasures it contained, and put fifty of the little heaps into the large part of the writing-case, and the remaining fifty little heaps into the compartment for pens and sealing-wax, and locked it up again.

## IV

For the next few days Alison collected advice about the spending of her money from every one she knew. All her friends were asked to give their opinions, and thus gradually she decided upon the best way to spend the five hundred threepenny bits which were for others.

Her first thought was naturally for her mother, who was an invalid. Mrs. Muirhead was very fond of flowers, and so Alison went at once to see the old flower-woman who sits outside Kensington High Street Station, and who was so cross with the Suffragettes in self-denial week for interfering with her "pitch," as she called it; and Alison arranged with her for a threepenny bunch of whatever was in season to be taken to her mother twice every week, on Saturdays and Wednesdays, for a year, and, to the old woman's intense

astonishment, she gave her one hundred and four of her threepenny bits.

Her uncle Mordaunt advised her to take in a weekly illustrated paper—say the *Sphere*—and, after she had looked at it herself, to send it to one of the lighthouses, where the men are very lonely and unentertained. Alison thought this was a very good idea. The *Sphere* cost two threepences a week, and postage a halfpenny, or one hundred and twelve threepences—altogether one pound eight shillings.

Alison had now spent two hundred and sixteen threepenny bits, and, having arranged these two things, she decided to wait till Christmas came nearer (it was now July) before she spent any more large sums, always, however, keeping a few threepenny bits handy in her purse in case of meeting any particularly hard case, such as a very blind man, or a begging mother with a dreadfully cold little baby, or a Punch and Judy man with a really nice

face, or a little boy who had fallen down and hurt himself badly, or an old woman who ought to be riding in a 'bus. In this way she got rid of fifty of her little coins before Christmas came near enough for her once more to think of little else but threepenny plans.

It was then that she found Tommy Cathcart so useful. Tommy Cathcart was one of her father's articled pupils, and it was he who reminded Alison of the claims of sandwichmen. Sandwichmen have an awfully bad time, Tommy explained to her. It is almost the last thing men do. No one carries sandwich-boards until he has failed in every other way.

After talking it over very seriously, they went together to a tobacconist near the Strand, who undertook to make up thirty little packets for threepence each, containing a clay pipe and tobacco, and these Tommy Cathcart and she slipped into the hands of the sandwichmen as



THESE TOMMY CATHCART AND SHE SLIPPED INTO THE HANDS  
OF THE SANDWICHMEN.



they drifted by in Regent Street, in the Strand, and in Oxford Street, while the rest were given to a little group of the men who were resting, with their sandwich-boards leaned against the wall, in a court near Shaftesbury Avenue.

“Don’t you think,” Alison said, “that those who carry a notice over the head as well ought to have more?”

But Tommy Cathcart thought not.

That exhausted seven and sixpence.

Another thing that Alison and Tommy Cathcart did was to knock at the door of the cabmen’s shelter opposite De Vere Gardens, and ask if she might present a few puddings for Christmas Day. The man said she might, and that used up seven-and-sixpence—three puddings at half a crown, thirty threepences.

The other people to whom Alison sent Christmas presents with Mr. Thomson’s money were the children of the boatmen who had taken out her and her father and

her cousins, Harry and Francis Friend, in the Isle of Wight last year. These boatmen were two brothers named Fagg—Jack and Willy Fagg—and their boat was the *Seamew*. Jack had four children and Willy six, and Alison used to go and see them now and then. After much consideration she sent four threepenny bits to each of these children, a shilling pipe, with real silver on it, to Jack and Willy, and a pound of two-shilling tea to Mrs. Jack and Mrs. Willy. That made sixteen shillings, or sixty-four threepenny bits.

Just then Alison had an unexpected piece of luck, for as she was passing a shop in Westbourne Grove she saw a window full of mittens at threepence a pair, sale price. Now, mittens are just the thing for cabmen in winter — cabmen and crossing-sweepers and errand-boys. So Alison bought thirty pairs, or seven-and-sixpence worth, and she gave a pair to each of the boys that called regularly—the butcher's

boy, and the baker's boy, and the grocer's boy, and a pair to the milkman, and a pair to the crossing-sweeper, and the rest were put in the hall for cabmen who brought her father home or took him out.

And then, just as they were getting rather in despair, one afternoon Tommy Cathcart came home with a brilliant idea.

"Smith," he said, "is the commonest name in England. In every workhouse in England," he said, "there must be one Smith at least. Why not," he said, "get, say, sixty picture postcards and send them addressed to Mrs. Smith or Mr. Smith, or plain Smith, to sixty workhouses? We can get," he said, "the names from 'Bradshaw.' A person in a workhouse will be awfully excited to get a Christmas card, and if," he said, "there happens to be no Smith, some one else will have it."

Alison liked the idea very much, and so they went off to a shop in the Strand absolutely full of picture postcards and

bought sixty at a penny each. They had some little difficulty in choosing, because Tommy Cathcart wanted a certain number to be photographs of Pauline Chase and other pretty people, but Alison said that views of London would be better, since most persons knew London, and the card would remind them of old times. As it was, so to speak, her money, Alison got her own way. Then they bought sixty halfpenny stamps, and returned home to find the towns in "Bradshaw" and send them off. That all came to seven-and-six, or thirty threepenny bits.

Then Alison had a very brilliant inspiration—to give Jimmie a beautiful silver collar all for himself, with the words "In memory of James Thomson" on it, as a Christmas present. Dogs have so few presents, and Jimmie really was very good, except when he lost his head in the Gardens, which indeed, to be truthful, he always did. So he had his collar on

Christmas morning, and it cost exactly twelve-and-six altogether, or fifty three-penny bits.

So much for the first five hundred.

## V

Alison had then to lay out the second five hundred, or £6 5s., on herself and herself alone. This was easier. She and her father spent three afternoons among the old furniture shops of Kensington and the Brompton Road, and at last came upon the very thing they were looking for in the back room of a shop close to the Oratory, kept by an elderly Jewish lady with a perfectly gigantic nose and rings on every finger.

This was an old bureau writing-desk, with drawers, and a flap to pull down to write on, and lots of pigeon-holes, and a very strong lock. Also a secret drawer. After some bargaining Mr. Muirhead got

it for six pounds, which left five shillings for writing paper and sealing-wax and blotting-paper and nibs.

And that was an end of the thousand threepenny bits, as the balance-sheet on the opposite page shows.

At least, not quite the end, as I will tell you. The face of the old Jewess, when the time came to pay for the bureau and Alison took forty-eight little packets of ten threepenny bits each out of her bag and laid them on the table, was a picture of perplexity and amusement.

"Well, ma tear, what's that?" she asked.

"Four hundred and eighty threepenny-bits—six pounds," said Alison.

"But, ma tear, what will I do with all the little money?"

"It's all I've got," said Alison.

"You see," said Mr. Muirhead—and then he told the old lady with the big nose the story.

# THE THOUSAND THREEPENNY BITS 51

## STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

### FIRST ACCOUNT—FOR OTHER PEOPLE.

	Three- pences.	£	s.	d.
A year's flowers for mother, twice a week, at 3d. a bunch ... ..	104	1	6	0
The <i>Sphere</i> for a year ... ..	104	1	6	0
Postage of same to a lighthouse ...	8	0	2	0
Odd threepenny-bits given to unhappy people in the streets, etc. ... ..	50	0	12	6
Tobacco and pipes to thirty sandwichmen, at 3d. each ... ..	30	0	7	6
Three Christmas puddings for the cabmen's shelter near de Vere Gardens, at 2s. 6d.	30	0	7	6
Ten Fagg children, at 1s. each ... ..	40	0	10	0
Two pipes for Jack and Willy Fagg, at 1s.	8	0	2	0
Two pounds tea for Mrs. Jack and Mrs. Willy, at 2s. ... ..	16	0	4	0
Mittens for cabmen, etc. ... ..	30	0	7	6
Sixty picture postcards for the Smith family at 1d., and postage at $\frac{1}{2}$ d. ... ..	30	0	7	6
Silver collar for Jimmie, with engraving ...	50	0	12	6
	500	£6	5	0

### SECOND ACCOUNT—FOR ALISON MUIRHEAD HERSELF.

	Three- pences.	£	s.	d.
Old Bureau ... ..	480	6	0	0
Writing paper, etc. ... ..	20	0	5	0
	500	6	5	0
First account total ... ..	500	6	5	0
Grand total ... ..	1000	£12	10	0

Audited and found correct,

(Signed) THOMAS W. CATHCART.

And what do you think she did? "Well, ma tear," she said, "I can't let you go away without something left, in case you met a poor beggar in the street. You must take back one of those little packets to go on with, as a present from me;" and she picked up one and placed it in Alison's hand, and Alison took it gladly.

And that was the beginning of a new Threepenny Trust, for Mr. Cathcart also contributed a little heap, and Mr. Muirhead henceforward made a point of saving every threepenny bit that he received in change (and I believe that sometimes he asked specially for them when he went to his bank) and bringing them home for Alison's fund; and Uncle Mordaunt must have done the same, for the last time he came to dinner he said to Alison, "I wish you'd get rid of this rubbish for me," and handed her seventeen of the little coins.

So you see that there is every chance of

Mr. James Thomson's kind scheme going on for a long time yet ; but, in so far as his own thousand threepenny bits are concerned, the story is done.



RODERICK'S PROS.



## RODERICK'S PROS.

ONCE upon a time there was a little boy of ten, who bowled out C. B. Fry. This little boy's name was Roderick Bulstrode (or Bulstrode is the name that we will give him here), and he lived in St. John's Wood, in one of the houses whose gardens join Lord's. His father played for the M.C.C. a good deal, and practised in the nets almost every day, to the bowling of various professionals, or pros., as they are called for short, but chiefly to that of Tom Stick ; and in the summer Roderick was more often at Lord's than not.

How it came about that Roderick bowled C. B. Fry was this way. Middlesex were playing Sussex, and Mr. Fry went to the nets early to practise, and

Roderick's father bowled to him and let Roderick have the ball now and then. And whether it was that Mr. Fry was not thinking, or was looking another way, or was simply very good-natured, I don't know, but one of Roderick's sneaks got under his bat and hit the stumps. (They were not sneaks, you must understand, because he wanted to bowl sneaks, but because he was not big enough to bowl any other way for 22 yards. He was only ten.) Roderick thus did that day what no one else could do, for Mr. Fry went in and made 143 not out, in spite of all the efforts of Albert Trott and Tarrant and J. T. Hearne.

Roderick's bedroom walls had been covered with portraits of cricketers for years, but after he bowled out C. B. Fry he took away a lot of them and made an open space with the last picture postcard of Mr. Fry right in the middle of it, and underneath, on the mantelpiece, he put the

ball he had bowled him with, which his father gave him, under a glass shade. And other little St. John's Wood boys, friends of Roderick's from the Abbey Road, and Hamilton Terrace, and Loudoun Road, and that very attractive red-brick village with a green of its own just off the Avenue Road, used to come and see it, and stand in front of it and hold their breath, rather like little girls looking at a new baby.

Roderick also had a "Cricketers' Birthday Book," so that when he came down to breakfast he used to say, "Tyldesley's thirty-five to-day," "Hutchings is twenty-four," and so on. And he knew the initials of every first-class amateur and the Christian name of every pro.

That was not Roderick's only cricketing triumph. It is true that he had never succeeded in bowling out any other really swell batsman, but he had shaken hands with Sammy Woods and J. R. Mason, and one day Lord Hawke took him by both

shoulders and lifted him to one side, saying: "Now then, Tommy, out of the way." But these were only chance acquaintances. His real cricketing friend was Tom Stick, the ground bowler.

Tom Stick came from Devonshire, which is a county without a first-class eleven that plays the M.C.C. in August, and he lived in a little street off Lisson Grove, where he kept a bird-fancier's shop. For most professional cricketers, you know, are something else as well, or they would not be able to live in the winter. Many of them make cricket-bats, many keep inns, many are gardeners. I know one who is a picture-framer, and another an organist, while George Hirst, who is the greatest of them all, makes toffee. Well, Tom Stick was a bird-fancier, with a partner named Dick Crawley, who used to mind the shop when Tom had to be at Lord's bowling to gentlemen, Roderick's father among them, or playing against

Haileybury or Rugby or wherever he was sent to do all the hard work and go in last.

Roderick's father was very fond of Tom and was quite happy to know that Roderick was with him, so that Roderick not only used to join Tom at Lord's, but also at the shop off Lisson Grove, where he often helped in cleaning out the cages and feeding the birds and teaching the bullfinches to whistle, and was very good friends also with certain puppies and rabbits. His own dog, a fox-terrier named "Sinhji," had come from Tom.

Tom used to bowl to Roderick in the mornings before the gentlemen arrived for their practice, and he taught him to hold his bat straight and not slope it, and to keep his feet still and not draw them away when the ball was coming (which are the two most important things in batting), and it was he who stopped Roderick from carrying an autograph-book about and

worrying the cricketers for their signatures. In fact, Tom was a kind of nurse to Roderick, and they were so much together that, whereas Tom was known to Roderick's small friends as "Roddy's Pro," Roderick was known to Tom's friends as "Sticky's Shadow."

Now it happened that last summer Roderick's father had been making a great many runs for the M.C.C. in one of their tours. (Roderick did not see him, for he had to stay at home and do his lessons; but his father sent him a telegram after each innings.) Mr. Bulstrode (as we are calling him) batted so well, indeed, that when he returned to London he was asked to play for Middlesex against Yorkshire on the following Monday, to take the place of one of the regular eleven who was ill; and you may be sure he said yes, for, although he was now thirty-two, this was the first time he had ever been asked to play for his county.

Roderick, you may be equally sure, was also pleased ; and when his father suddenly said to him, " Would you like to come with me ? " his excitement was almost too great to bear.

" And Tom too ? " he asked, after a minute or so.

" Yes, Tom's going," said his father. " He's going to field if anyone is hurt or has to leave early. But if he's not wanted he will look after you."

" Hurray ! " said Roderick. " I know what I shall do. I shall score every run and keep the bowling analysis too."

The train left St. Pancras on the Sunday afternoon, and that in itself was an excitement, for Roderick had never travelled on Sunday before ; but before that had come the rapture of packing his bag, which on this occasion was not an ordinary one, but an old cricket-bag of his father's, which he begged for, in which were not only his sponge and collars and other necessary

things, but his flannels and his bat and pads.

This bag he insisted upon carrying himself all along the platform, and, as several of the Middlesex team were also on their way to the train at the same moment, the presence of so small a cricketer in their midst made a great sensation among the porters.

"My word!" said one, "Yorkshire will have to look out this time."

"Who's the giant," asked another, "walking just behind Albert Trott? I shouldn't like to be in when he bowled his fastest."

But Roderick was unconscious of any laughter. He was the proudest boy in London, although his arm, it is true, was beginning to ache horribly. But when, as he was climbing into the carriage, the guard lifted him up and called him "Prince Run-get-simply," he joined in the fun.



THE PRESENCE OF SO SMALL A CRICKETER MADE A GREAT  
SENSATION AMONG THE PORTERS.



It was a deliriously happy journey, for all the cricketers were very nice to him, and Mr. Warner talked about Australia, and Mr. Bosanquet showed him how he held the ball to make it break from the leg when the batsman thought it was going to break from the off, and at Nottingham Mr. Douglas bought him a bun and a banana. They got to Sheffield just before eight, and Roderick went to bed very soon after, in a little bed in his father's room in the hotel.

The first thing Roderick did the next morning was to buy a scoring-book and a pencil, and then he and his father explored Sheffield a little before it was time to go to the ground at Bramall Lane and get some practice.

The people clustered all round and in front of the nets and watched the batsmen, and now and then they were nearly killed, as always happens before a match. They pointed out the cricketers to each other.

"There's Warner," they said. "That's Bosanquet—the tall one." "Where's Trott? Why, there, bowling at Warner. Good old Alberto!" and so on.

"Who's the man in the end net?" Roderick heard some one ask.

"I don't know. One of Middlesex's many new men, I suppose," said the other.

"But he can hit a bit, can't he?" the first man said, as Roderick's father stepped out to a ball and banged it half-way across the ground.

Roderick was very proud, and he felt that the time had come to make his father known. "That's Bulstrode," he said.

"Oh, that's Bulstrode, is it?" said the second man. "I've heard of him. He makes lots of runs on the M.C.C. tours. But I guess Georgy 'll get him."

"Who is Georgy?" asked Roderick.

"Georgy—why, where do you come from? Fancy being in Sheffield and ask-

ing who Georgy is. Georgy is Georgy Hirst, of course."

Roderick walked back to the pavilion with his father very proudly. "You'll have to be very careful how you play Hirst," he said.

"I shall," said his father; "but why?"

"Because the men were saying he's going to get you." Mr. Bulstrode laughed; but he thought it very likely too.

I'm not going to tell you all about the match, for it lasted three days, and was very much like other matches. Roderick had a corner seat in the pavilion, where he could see everything, and for the first day he scored every run and kept the analysis right through. This included his father's innings, which lasted, alas! far too short a time, for, after making four good hits to the boundary, he was caught close in at what was called silly mid-on off—what bowler do you think?—George Hirst.

But the next day Roderick gave up work, because he wanted to see more of Tom, and Tom made room for him in the professionals' box while Yorkshire were in, and he saw all the wonderful men—quite close too—Tunncliffe and Denton and Hirst—and even talked with them. Hirst sat right in front of the box, with his brown sunburned arms on the ledge, and his square, jolly, sunburned face on his arms, and said funny things about the play in broad Yorkshire; and now and then he would say something to Roderick. And then suddenly down went a wicket, and Hirst got up to go in.

“Give me a wish for luck,” he said to Roddy.

“I wish my father may catch you out,” said Roddy; “but not until,” he added, “you have made a lot of runs.”

“If he does,” said Hirst, “I’ll give thee some practice to-morrow morning.”

Poor Roddy, this was almost too much. It is bad enough to watch your favourites batting at any time, for every ball may be the last ; but it is terrible when you equally want two people to bring something off—for Roddy wanted Hirst (whom he now adored) to make a good innings, and, at the same time, he wanted his father to catch Hirst out.

Hirst was not out when it was time for lunch, and so Roderick was able to tell his father all about it.

“What’s this, Hirst?” said Mr. Bulstrode, when the teams were being photographed. “Give me a chance, and let me see if I can hold it.”

Hirst laughed, and when he laughs it is like a sunset in fine weather. “I have a spy round to see where thee’re standing every over,” he said, “and that’s where I’ll never knock it.”

“But what about my boy’s practice?” Mr. Bulstrode replied.

“Ah, we'll see about that,” said the Yorkshireman.

But, as a matter of fact, Roderick got his practice according to the bargain, for, as it happened, it was Mr. Bulstrode who caught Hirst, at third man.

I need hardly tell you that Roderick dreamed that night. His sleep was full of Hirsts, all jolly and all hitting catches which his father buttered. But in the morning, when he knew how true his luck was, he was almost too happy. Hirst was as good as his word, and they practised in the nets together for nearly half an hour, and Roderick nearly bowled him twice.

In Middlesex's next innings Roderick's father made thirty-five, all of which Roderick scored with the greatest care; but the match could not be finished owing to a very heavy shower, and so this innings did not matter very much one way or the other, except that it made Mr. Bulstrode's place safe for another match.

Of that match I am not going to tell ;  
but I have perhaps said enough to  
show you how exceedingly delightful  
it must be to have a father who plays for  
his county.

THE HISTORY OF THE  
CITY OF BOSTON  
FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT  
TO THE PRESENT TIME  
IN TWO VOLUMES  
BY NATHANIEL BENTLEY  
OF THE BARR, AT LAW  
IN 1786  
LONDON: PRINTED BY J. JOHNSON, ST. PAULS CHURCH-YARD  
1786

## THE MONKEY'S REVENGE



## THE MONKEY'S REVENGE

ONCE upon a time there was a little girl named Clara Amabel Platts. She lived in Kensington, near the Gardens, and every day when it was fine she walked with Miss Hobbs round the Round Pond. Miss Hobbs was her governess. When it was wet she read a book, or as much of a book as she could, being still rather weak in the matter of long words. When she did not read she made wool-work articles for her aunts, and now and then something for her mother's birthday present or Christmas present, which was supposed to be a secret, but which her mother, however hard she tried not to look, always knew all about. But this did not prevent her mother, who was a

very nice lady, from being extraordinarily surprised when the present was given to her. (That word "extraordinarily," by the way, is one of the words which Clara would have had to pass over if she were reading this story to herself; but you, of course, are cleverer.)

It was generally admitted by Mrs. Platts, and also by Miss Hobbs and Kate Woodley the nurse, that Clara was a very good girl; but she had one fault which troubled them all, and that was too much readiness in saying what came into her mind. Mrs. Platts tried to check her by making her count five before she made any comment on what was happening, so that she could be sure that she really ought to say it; and Kate Woodley used often to click her tongue when Clara was rattling on; but Miss Hobbs had another and more serious remedy. She used to tell Clara to ask herself three questions before she made any of her

quick little remarks. These were the questions : (1) "Is it kind?" (2) "Is it true?" (3) "Is it necessary?" If the answer to all three was "Yes," then Clara might say what she wanted to ; otherwise not. The result was that when Clara and Miss Hobbs walked round the Round Pond Clara had very little to say ; because, you know, if it comes to that, hardly anything is necessary.

Well, on December 20, 1907, the postman brought Mrs. Platts a letter from Clara's aunt, Miss Amabel Patterson of Chislehurst, after whom she had been named, and it was that letter which makes this story. It began by saying that Miss Patterson would very much like Clara to have a nice Christmas present, and it went on to say that if she had been very good lately, and continued good up to the time of buying the present, it was to cost seven-and-six, but if she had not been very good it was only to cost a shilling. This

shows you the kind of aunt Miss Patterson was. For myself, I don't think that at Christmas-time a matter of good or bad behaviour ought to be remembered at all. And I think that everything then ought to cost seven-and-six. But Miss Patterson had her own way of doing things; and it did not really matter about the shilling at all, because, as it was agreed that Clara had been very good for a long time, Mrs. Platts (who did not admire Miss Patterson's methods any more than we do) naturally decided that unless anything still were to happen (which is very unlikely with six-and-sixpence at stake) the present should cost seven-and-six, just as if nothing about a shilling had ever been said.

*Unless anything were to happen. Ah!* Everything in this story depends on that.

Clara was as good as gold all the morning, and she and Miss Hobbs marched round the Round Pond like soldiers, Miss Hobbs talking all the time and Clara as

dumb as a fish. At dinner also she behaved beautifully, although the pudding was not at all what she liked; and then it was time for her mother to take her out to buy the present. So, still good, Clara ran upstairs to be dressed.

As I dare say you know, there are in Kensington High Street a great many large shops, and the largest of these, which is called Biter's, has a very nice way every December of filling one of its windows (which for the rest of the year is full of dull things, such as tables, and rolls of carpets, and coal scuttles) with such seasonable and desirable articles as boats for the Round Pond, and dolls of all sorts and sizes, and steam engines with quite a lot of rails and signals, and clockwork animals, and guns. And when you go inside you can't help hearing the gramophone.

It was into this shop that Mrs. Platts and Clara went, wondering whether they would buy just one thing that cost seven-

and-six all at once, or a lot of smaller things that came to seven-and-six altogether; which is one of the pleasantest problems to ponder over that this life holds. Well, everything was going splendidly, and Clara, after many changings of her mind, had just decided on a beautiful wax doll with cheeks like tulips and real black hair, when she chanced to look up and saw a funny little old gentleman come in at the door; and all in a flash she forgot her good resolutions and everything that was depending on them, and seizing her mother's arm, and giving no thought at all to Miss Hobbs's three questions, or to Kate Woodley's clicking tongue, or to counting five, she cried in a loud quick whisper, "Oh, mother, do look at that queer little man! Isn't he just like a monkey?"

Now there were two dreadful things about this speech. One was that it was made before Aunt Amabel's present had



"DO LOOK AT THAT QUEER LITTLE MAN!"



been bought, and therefore Mrs. Platts was only entitled to spend a shilling, and the other was that the little old gentleman quite clearly heard it, for his face flushed and he looked exceedingly uncomfortable. Indeed, it was an uncomfortable time for every one, for Mrs. Platts was very unhappy to think that her little girl not only should have lost the nice doll, but also have been so rude; the little old gentleman was confused and nervous; the girl who was waiting on them was distressed when she knew what Clara's unlucky speech had cost her; and Clara herself was in a passion of tears. After some time, in which Mrs. Platts and the girl did their best to soothe her, Clara consented to receive a shilling box of chalks as her present, and was led back still sobbing. Never was there such a sad ending to an exciting expedition.

Miss Hobbs luckily had gone home; but Kate Woodley made things worse by

being very sorry and clicking away like a Bee clock, and Clara hardly knew how to get through the rest of the day.

Clara's bedtime came always at a quarter to eight, and between her supper, which was at half-past six, and that hour she used to come downstairs and play with her father and mother. On this evening she was very quiet and miserable, although Mrs. Platts and Mr. Platts did all they could to cheer her; and she even committed one of the most extraordinary actions of her life, for she said, when it was still only half-past seven, that she should like to go to bed.

And she would have gone had not at that very moment a tremendous knock sounded at the front door—so tremendous that, in spite of her unhappiness, Clara had, of course, to wait and see what it was.

And what do you think it was? It was a box addressed to Mrs. Platts, and it

came from Biter's, the very shop where the tragedy had occurred.

"But I haven't ordered anything," said Mrs. Platts.

"Never mind," said Mr. Platts, who had a practical mind. "Open it."

So the box was opened, and inside was a note, and this is what it said:

"DEAR MADAM,

"I am so distressed to think that I am the cause of your little girl losing her present, that I feel there is nothing I can do but give her one myself. For if I had not been so foolish—at my age too!—as to go to Biter's this afternoon, without any real purpose but to look round, she would never have got into trouble. Biter's is for children, not for old men with queer faces. And so I beg leave to send her this doll, which I hope is the right one, and with it a few clothes and necessities, and I am sure that she will not forget how

it was that she very nearly lost it altogether.

“ Believe me, yours penitently,

“ THE LITTLE-OLD-GENTLE-  
MAN-WHO-REALLY-IS-(AS-  
HIS-LOOKING-GLASS-HAS-  
TOO-OFTEN-TOLD-HIM)-  
LIKE-A-MONKEY.”

To Clara this letter, when Mrs. Platts read it to her, seemed like something in a dream, but when the box was unpacked it was found to contain, truly enough, not only the identical doll which she had wanted, with cheeks like tulips and real black hair, but also frocks for it, and night-dresses and petticoats, and a card of tortoiseshell toilet requisites, and three hats, and a diabolo set, and a tiny doll's parasol for Kensington Gardens on sunny days.

Poor Clara didn't know what to do, and so she simply sat down with the doll

in her arms and cried again ; but this was a totally different kind of crying from that which had gone before. And when Kate Woodley came to take her to bed she cried too.

And the funny thing is that, though the little old gentleman's present looks much more like a reward for being naughty than a punishment, Clara has hardly ever since said a quick unkind thing that she could be sorry for, and Miss Hobbs's three questions are never wanted at all, and Kate Woodley has entirely given up clicking.



## THE NOTICE-BOARD



## THE NOTICE-BOARD

ONCE upon a time there was a family called Morgan—Mr. Morgan the father, Mrs. Morgan the mother, Christopher Morgan, aged twelve, Claire Morgan, aged nine, Betty Morgan, aged seven, a fox-terrier, a cat, a bullfinch, a nurse, a cook, a parlourmaid, a housemaid, and a boy named William. William hardly counts, because he came only for a few hours every day, and then lived almost wholly in the basement, and when he did appear above-stairs it was always in the company of a coal-scuttle. That was the family; and at the time this story begins it had just removed from Bloomsbury to Bayswater.

While the actual moving was going on

Christopher Morgan, Claire Morgan, and Betty Morgan, with the dog and the bullfinch, had gone to Sandgate to stay with their grandmother, who, with extraordinary good sense, lived in a house with a garden that ran actually to the beach, so that, although in stormy weather the lawn was covered with pebbles, in fine summer weather you could run from your bedroom into the sea in nothing but a bath-towel or a dressing-gown, or one of those bath-towels which are dressing-gowns. Christopher used to do this, and Claire would have joined him but that the doctor forbade it on account of what he called her defective circulation—two long words which mean cold feet.

When, however, the moving was all done and the new house quite ready, the three children and the dog and the bullfinch returned to London, and getting by great good luck a taxicab at Charing Cross, were whirled to No. 23, Wester-

ham Gardens almost in a minute, at a cost of two-and-eightpence, with fourpence supplement for the luggage. Christopher sat on the front seat, watching the meter all the time, and calling out whenever it had swallowed another twopence. The first eightpence, as you have probably also noticed, goes slowly, but after that the twopences disappear just like sweets.

It is, as you know, a very exciting thing to move to a new house. Everything seems so much better than in the last, especially the cupboards and the wall-papers. In place of the old bell-pulls you find electric bells, and there is a speaking-tube between the dining-room and the kitchen, and the coal-cellar is much larger, and the bath-room has a better arrangement of taps, and you can get hot water on the stairs. But, of course, the electric light is the most exciting thing of all, and it was so at Westerham Gardens, because in Bloomsbury there had been gas.

But Mr. Morgan was exceedingly serious about it, and delivered a lecture on the importance — the vital importance — of always turning off the switch as you leave the room, unless, of course, there is some one in it.

Christopher and Claire and Betty were riotously happy in their new home for some few days, especially as they were so near Kensington Gardens, only a very little way, in fact, from the gate where the Dogs' Cemetery is.

And then suddenly they began to miss something. What it was they had no idea ; but they knew that in some mysterious way, nice as the new house was, in one respect it was not so nice as the old one. Something was lacking.

It was quite by chance that they discovered what it was ; for, being sent one morning to Whiteley's, on their return they entered Westerham Gardens by a new way, and there on a board fixed to

the railings of the corner house they read the terrible words :

ORGANS AND STREET CRIES  
PROHIBITED.

Then they all knew in an instant what it was that had vaguely been troubling them in their new house. It was a house without music—a house that stood in a neighbourhood where there were no bands, no organs, and no costermongers.

“What a horrid shame !” said Claire. And then they began to talk about the organs and bands that used to come to their old home in Bloomsbury.

“Do you remember the Italian woman in the yellow handkerchief on Thursday mornings during French ?” said Christopher.

“Yes,” said Betty, “and the monkey boy with the accordion on Mondays.”

“And the Punch and Judy on Wednesday afternoons,” said Claire.

“And ‘Fresh wallflowers,’ ‘Nice wallflowers!’ at eleven o’clock every day in spring,” said Christopher.

“And the band that always played ‘Poppies’ on Tuesday evenings at bedtime,” said Claire.

“And the organ with the panorama on Friday mornings,” said Betty.

“And the best organ of all, that had one new tune every week, on Saturdays,” said Christopher.

“It must be a great day for the organists when they have a new tune,” said Claire.

“Yes,” said Betty ; “but you have forgotten the funniest of all—the old man with a wooden leg on Tuesday and Friday.”

“But he had only one tune,” said Christopher.

“It was a very nice tune,” said Betty.

“But why I liked him was because he always nodded and smiled at me.”

“That was only his trick,” said Christopher. “They all do that if they think you have a penny.”

“I don’t care,” said Betty stoutly; “he did it as if he meant it.”

That night, just after Claire had undressed, Christopher came in and sat on her bed. “I’ve got an idea,” he said. “Let’s have a new notice-board painted with

ORGANS AND STREET CRIES INVITED
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on it, and have it fixed on our railings. Then we shall get some music again. I reckon that Mr. Randall’s son would make it just like the other for about four shillings, and that’s what we’ve got.”

Mr. Randall’s son was the family carpenter, and he was called that because his

father had been the family carpenter before him for many years. When his father, Mr. Randall, was alive, the son had no name, but was always referred to as Mr. Randall's son, and now that the old man was dead he was still spoken of in that way, although he was a man of fifty and had sons of his own. (But what they would be called it makes my head ache to think.)

Mr. Randall's son smiled when he was asked if he could and would make a notice-board. "I will, Master Christopher," he said ; "but I'm thinking you had better spend your money on something else. A nice boat, now, for the Round Pond. Or a pair of stilts—I could make you a pair of stilts in about an hour." Poor Christopher looked wistful, and then bravely said that he would rather have the notice-board. After giving careful instructions as to the style of painting the words, he impressed upon Mr. Randall's son the im-

portance of wrapping the board very carefully in paper when he brought it back, because it was a surprise.

“A surprise!” said Mr. Randall’s son with a great hearty laugh; “I should think it will be a surprise to some of ’em. I’d like to be there to see the copper’s face when he reads it.”

Mr. Randall’s son was not there to see the copper’s face; but the copper—by which Mr. Randall’s son meant the policeman—did read it in the company of about forty other persons, chiefly errand-boys and cabmen, in front of the Morgans’ house on the morning after Christopher had skilfully fixed it to the area railings; and having read it he walked off quickly to the nearest police-station to take advice.

The result was that just as Mr. Morgan was leaving for the city the policeman knocked at the door and asked to see him.

Mr. Morgan soon afterwards came from the study and showed the policeman

out, and then he sent for Christopher. After Christopher had confessed, "My dear boy," he said, "this won't do at all. That notice-board at the end of this street means either that the owners of Westersham Gardens or a large number of the tenants wish the neighbourhood to be free from street music. If we, who are newcomers, set up notice-boards to a contrary effect, we are doing a very rude and improper thing. I quite understand that you miss the organs that we used to have, but the only way to get them back would be to obtain the permission of every one in the Gardens; and that, of course, is absurd." With these words, which he afterwards wished he had never used, Mr. Morgan hurried off to the nearest Tube to make money in the city, which was how he spent his days.

Christopher carried the news to Claire, who at once said, "Then we must go to every house to get leave."

“Of course,” said Christopher. “How ripping !”

And they started immediately.

It would take too long to tell you how they got on at each house. From some they were sent away ; at others they met with sympathy.

Their words to the servant who opened the door were : “Please give your mistress the compliments of No. 23, and ask if she really wants street music to be prohibited.”

“Of course we don’t, my dears,” said an old lady at No. 14. “We should love to have a nice pianoforte organ every now and then, or even a band ; but it would never do to say so. Every one is so select about here. Why, in that house opposite lives the widow of a Lord Mayor.”

Claire made a note of the number to tell Betty, who loved rank and grandeur, and then they ascended the next steps, where they found the most useful person of all, a gentleman who came down to see

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them, smoking a pipe and wearing carpet slippers. "In reply to your question," he said, "I should welcome street music ; but the matter has nothing to do either with me or with you. It is all settled by the old lady at the corner, the house to which the notice-board is fixed. It is she who owns the property, and it is she who stops the organs. If you want to do any good you must see her. Her name is Miss Seaton, and as you will want a little cake and lemonade to give you strength for the interview, you had better come in here for a moment." So saying he led them into the dining-room, which was hung with coloured pictures of hunting and racing, and made them very comfortable, and then sent them off with best wishes for good luck.

Telling Claire to wait a moment, Christopher ran off to their own house for the board, and returned quickly with it wrapped up under his arm. He rang the

bell of the corner house boldly, and then, seeing a notice which ran, "Do not knock unless an answer is required," knocked boldly, too. It was opened by an elderly butler. "Please tell Miss Seaton that Mr. and Miss Morgan from No. 23 would like to see her," said Christopher.

"On what business?" asked the butler.

"On important business to Westerham Gardens," said Christopher.

"Wait here a moment," said the butler, and creaked slowly upstairs. "Here" was the hall, and they sat on a polished mahogany form, with a little wooden roller at each end, exactly opposite a stuffed dancing bear with his arms hungry for umbrellas. Upstairs they heard a door open and a muttered conversation, and then the door shut and the butler creaked slowly down again.

"Will you come this way?" he said, and creaked slowly up once more, followed by the children, who had great difficulty in

finding the steps at that pace, and showed them into a room in which was sitting an old lady in a high-backed arm-chair near the fire. On the hearthrug were five cats, and there was one in her lap and one on the table. "Oh !" thought Claire, "if only Betty was here !" For Betty not only loved rank and grandeur but adored cats.

"Well," said the old lady, "what is it?"

"If you please," said Christopher, "we have come about the notice-board outside, which says, 'Organs and street cries prohibited.'"

"Yes," Claire broke in ; "you see, we have just moved to No. 23, and at our old home—in Bloomsbury, you know—there was such a lot of music, and a Punch and Judy, and there's none here, and we wondered if it really meant it."

"Because," Christopher went on, "it seemed to us that this notice-board"—and here he unwrapped the new one—"could





"WE HAD IT MADE ON PURPOSE."

just as easily be put up as the one you have. We had it made on purpose." And he held it up before Miss Seaton's astonished eyes.

" "Organs and street cries *invited!*" " she exclaimed. "Why, I never heard such a thing in my life. They drive me frantic."

"Couldn't you put cotton-wool in your ears?" Claire asked.

"Or ask them to move a little further on—nearer No. 23?" said Christopher.

"But, my dear children," said the old lady, "you really are very wilful. I hope your father and mother don't know what you are doing."

"No," said Christopher.

"Well, sit down, both of you," said Miss Seaton, "and let us talk it over." So they sat down, and Claire took up one of the cats and stroked it behind the ears, and Miss Seaton asked them a number of questions.

After a while she rang the bell for the butler, who creaked in and out and then in again with cake and a rather good syrup to mix with water; and they gradually became quite friendly, not only with Miss Seaton, but with each of the cats in turn.

“Are there any more?” Claire asked.

“No, only seven,” said Miss Seaton. “I never have more and I never have fewer.”

“Do you give them all names?” said Claire.

“Of course,” said Miss Seaton. “That is partly why there are only seven. I name them after the days of the week.”

“Oh!” thought Claire again, “if only Betty were here!”

“The black one there, with the white front, is Sunday,” Miss Seaton continued. “That all black one is Monday—black Monday, you know. The tortoiseshell is Friday. The sandy one is Saturday.”

“It was on Saturday,” said Christopher, “that the best organ of all used to come, the one with a new tune every week.”

“The blue Persian is Wednesday,” said Miss Seaton, not taking any notice of his remark. “The white Persian is Tuesday, and the grey Iceland cat is Thursday. And now,” she added, “you must go home, and I will think over your request and let you have the answer.”

That evening, just after the children had finished their supper, a ring came at the door, followed, after it was opened, by scuffling feet and a mysterious thud. Then the front door banged, and Annie the maid came in to say that there was a heavy box in the hall, addressed to Master and Miss Morgan. The children tore out, and found a large case with, just as Annie had said, Christopher and Claire’s name upon it. Christopher rushed off for a hammer and screwdriver, and in a few

minutes the case was opened. Inside was a note and a very weighty square thing in brown paper. Christopher began to undo the paper, while Claire read the note aloud :

“ 1, WESTERHAM GARDENS, W.

“ DEAR MISS AND MASTER MORGAN,

“ I have been thinking about your request all the afternoon, as I promised I would, and have been compelled to decide against it in the interests not only of the property but of several of my old tenants, whose nerves cannot bear noise. But as I feel that your father, when he made inquiries about your new house, was not sufficiently informed as to the want of entertainment in the neighbourhood, I wish to make it up in so far as I can to you all for your disappointment, and therefore beg your acceptance of a musical box which was a great pleasure to me when I was much younger, and may, I trust, do

something to amuse you, although the tunes are, I fear, not of the newest.

“ Believe me yours sincerely,

“ VICTORIA SEATON.”

“ There, father,” said Christopher, “ you see she wasn’t really cross at all.”

“ No,” said Mr. Morgan ; “ but, all the same, this must be the last of such escapades.”

Then he opened the musical box, and they found from the piece of paper inside the lid, written in violet ink in a thin, upright, rather curly foreign hand, that it had twelve tunes. Mr. Morgan wound it up, and they all stood round watching the great brass barrel, with the little spikes on it, slowly revolve, while the teeth of the comb were caught up one by one by the spikes to make the notes. There was also a little drum and a peal of silver bells. Although old, it was in excellent order, and very gentle and ripply in tone ; and I

wish I had been there too, for it is a long time since I heard a musical box, every one now having gramophones with sore throats.

The first tune was "The Last Rose of Summer" and the second the beautiful prison song from "Il Trovatore." When it came to the seventh the children looked at each other and smiled.

"Why," said Betty, "that's the tune the nice man with the wooden leg on Tuesdays and Fridays always played."

And what do you think it was? It was "Home, sweet Home."

THE MISS BANNISTERS'  
BROTHER



## THE MISS BANNISTERS' BROTHER

### I

CHRISTINA's father was as good as his word—the doll came, by post, in a long wooden box, only three days after he had left for Paris. All the best dolls come from Paris, but you have to call them “poupées” there when you ask the young ladies in the shops for them.

Christina had been in the garden ever since she got up, waiting for the postman—there was a little gap in the trees where you could see him coming up the road—and she and Roy had run to meet him across the hay-field directly they spied him in the distance. Running across the

hay-field was forbidden until after hay-making; but when a doll is expected from Paris . . . !

Christina's father was better than his word, for it was the most beautiful doll ever made, with a whole wardrobe of clothes, too.

Also a tiny tortoiseshell comb and a powder puff. Also an extra pair of bronzed boots. Her eyes opened and shut, and even her eyebrows were real hair. This, as you know, is unusual in dolls, their hair, as a rule, being made of other materials and far too yellow, and their eyebrows being just paint. "She shall be called Diana," said Christina, who had always loved the name from afar.

Christina took Diana to her mother at once, Roy running behind her with the box and the brown paper and the string and the wardrobe, and Chrissie calling back every minute, "Don't drop the powder puff whatever you do!" "Hold

tight to the hand-glass !” and things like that.

“ It’s splendid !” Mrs. Tiverton said. “ There isn’t a better doll in the world ; only, Chrissie dear, be very careful with it. I don’t know but that father would have done better to have got something stronger—this is so very fragile. I think perhaps you had better have it only indoors. Yes, that’s the best way ; after to-day you must play with Diana only indoors.”

It was thus that Diana came to Mapleton.

How Christina loved her that first day ! She carried her everywhere and showed her everything—all over the house, right into the attics ; all over the garden, right into the little black stove-place under the greenhouse, where Pedder, the gardener, read last Sunday’s paper over his lunch ; into the village, to the general shop, to introduce her to the postmistress, who lived behind a brass railing in the odour of bacon

and calico ; into the stables, to kiss Lord Roberts, the old white horse. Jim, who groomed the General, was the only person who did not admire the doll properly ; but how could you expect a nice feeling from a boy who sets dogs on rats ?

## II

It was two or three days after this that Roy went down to the river to fish. He had to go alone, because Christina wanted to play with Diana in the nursery ; but not more than half an hour had passed when he heard feet swishing through the long grass behind him, and, looking up, there was Christina. Now, as Christina had refused so bluntly to have anything to do with his fishing, Roy was surprised to see her, but more surprised still to see that Diana had come too.

“ Why, surely mother never said you might bring Diana ? ” he exclaimed.

“ No,” said Christina, rather sulkily,



THERE WAS CHRISTINA.



"but I didn't think she'd mind. Besides, she's gone to the village, and I couldn't ask her."

Roy looked troubled; his mother did not often make rules to interfere with their play, and when she did she liked to be obeyed. She had certainly forbidden Christina to take Diana out of the house. He did not say anything. Christina sat down and began to play. She was not really at all happy, because she knew it was wrong of her to have disobeyed, and she was really a very good girl. Roy went on fishing.

"Oh, do do something else," Christina cried pettishly, after a few minutes. "It's so cold sitting here waiting for you to catch stupid fish that never come. Let's go to the cave." The cave was an old disused lime-kiln, where robbers might easily have lived.

"All right," Roy said.

"I'll get there first," Christina called out, beginning to run.

"Bah !" said Roy, and ran after. They had raced for a hundred yards, when, with a cry, Christina fell. Roy, who was still some distance behind, having had to pack up his rod, hastened to Christina's side. He found her looking anxiously into Diana's face.

"Oh, Roy," she wailed, "her eyes have gone !"

It was too true. Diana, lately so radiantly observant, now turned to the world the blankest of empty sockets. Roy took her poor head in his hand and shook it. A melancholy rattle told that a pair of once serviceable blue eyes were now at large. Christina sank on the grass in an agony of grief—due partly, also, to the knowledge that if she had not been naughty this would never have happened. Roy stood by, feeling hardly less unhappy. After a while he took her arm. "Come along," he said; "let's see if Jim can mend her."

"Jim!" Christina cried in a fury, shaking off his hand.

"But come along, anyway," Roy said.

Christina continued sobbing. After a while she moved to rise, but suddenly fell back again. Her sobbing as suddenly ceased. "Roy!" she exclaimed fearfully, "I can't walk."

Christina had sprained her ankle.

Roy ran to the house as fast as he could to find help, and very soon old Pedder, the gardener, and Jim were carrying Christina between them, with mother, who had just come back, and nurse, walking by her side. Christina was put to bed and her foot wrapped in bandages, but she cried almost incessantly, no matter how often she was assured that she was forgiven. "Her sobs," the cook said, coming downstairs after her twentieth visit to the nursery—"her sobs are that heartrending I couldn't stand it; and all the while she asks for that blessed doll, which its eyes is rattling in

its head like marbles, through falling on the ground, and Master Roy and Jim's trying to catch them with a skewer."

Cook was quite right. Roy and Jim, with Diana between them, were seated in the harness-room, probing tenderly the depths of that poor Parisienne's skull. A housemaid was looking on without enthusiasm. "You won't do it," she said every now and then; "you can't catch dolls' eyes with skewers. No one can. It's impossible. The King himself couldn't. The Primest Minister couldn't. No," she went on, "no one could do it. No one but the Miss Bannisters' Brother near where I live at Dormstaple. He could. You ought to take it to him. He'd mend it in a jiffy—there's nothing he can't do in that way."

Roy said nothing, but went on prodding and probing. At last he gave up in despair. "All right, I'll take it to the Miss Bannisters' Brother," he said.

"Dormstaple's only six miles." But a sudden swoop from a figure in the doorway interrupted his bold plan.

"You'll do nothing of the kind," cried nurse, seizing the doll, "with that angel upstairs crying for it every minute, and the doctor saying she's in a high fever with lying on the wet grass"; and with a swirl of white skirts and apron, nurse and Diana were gone.

Roy put his hands in his pockets and wandered moodily into the garden. The world seemed to have no sun in it any more.

### III

The next day Christina was really ill. It was not only the ankle, but she had caught a chill, the doctor said, and they must be very careful with her. Roy went about with a sad and sadder face, for Christina was his only playmate, and he loved her more than anything else;

besides, there was now no one to bowl to him, and also it seemed so silly not to be able to mend a doll's eyes. He moped in the house all the morning, and was continually being sent away from Christina's door, because she was too ill to bear anyone in the room except nurse. She was wandering in her mind, nurse said, and kept on saying that she had blinded her doll, and crying to have its eyes made right again ; but she would not let a hand be laid upon her, so that to have Diana mended seemed impossible. Nurse cried too, as she said it, and Roy joined with her. He could not remember ever having been so miserable.

The doctor looked very grave when he was going away. "That doll ought to be put right," he said to Mrs. Tiverton. "She's a sensitive little thing, evidently, and this feeling of disobeying you and treating her father's present lightly is doing her a lot of harm, apart altogether

from the chill and the sprain. If we could get those eyes in again she'd be better in no time, I believe."

Roy and his mother heard this with a sinking heart, for they knew that Christina's arms locked Diana to her side almost as if they were bars of iron.

"Anyway," the doctor said, "I've left some medicine that ought to give her some sleep, and I shall come again this afternoon." So saying, he touched up his horse, and Mrs. Tiverton walked into the house again.

Roy stood still pondering.

Suddenly his mind was made up, and he set off for the high road at a good swinging pace. At the gate he passed Jim. "If they want to know where I am," he called, "say I've gone to Dormstaple, to the Miss Bannisters' Brother."

## IV

Miss Sarah Bannister and Miss Selina Bannister had lived in Dormstaple as long almost as anyone could remember, although they were by no means old. They had the red house with white windows, the kind of house which one can see only in old English market-towns. There was a gravel drive before it, in the shape of a banana, the carriages going in at one end and out at the other, stopping at the front door-steps in the middle. A china cockatoo hung in the window. The door knocker was of the brightest brass; it was a pleasure to knock it.

Behind the house was a very large garden, with a cedar in the midst, and a very soft lawn, on which the same birds settled every morning in winter for the breakfast that the Miss Bannisters provided. The cedar and the other trees had

cigar-boxes nailed to them, for tits or wrens to build in, and half cocoa-nuts and lumps of fat were always hung just outside the windows. In September button mushrooms grew on the lawn—enough for breakfast every morning. At one side of the house was the stable and coach-house, on the other side a billiard-room, now used as a workshop. And this workshop brings us to the Miss Bannisters' Brother.

The Miss Bannisters' Brother was an invalid, and he was also what is called eccentric. "Eccentric, that's what he is," Mr. Stallabrass, who kept the King's Arms, had said, and there could be no doubt of it after that. This meant that he wore rather shabby clothes, and took no interest in the town, and was rarely seen outside the house or the garden.

Rumour said, however, that he was very clever with his hands, and could make anything. What was the matter

with the Miss Bannisters' Brother no one seemed to know, but it gradually kept him more and more indoors.

No one ever spoke of him as Mr. Bannister; they always said the Miss Bannisters' Brother. If you could see the Miss Bannisters, especially Miss Selina, you would understand this; but although they had deep, gruff voices, they were really very kind.

As time went on, and the Miss Bannisters' Brother did not seem to grow any better, or to be likely to take up his gardening and his pigeons again, the Miss Bannisters had racked their brains to think of some employment for him other than reading, which is not good for anyone all day long. One evening, some years before this story, while the three were at tea, Miss Selina cried suddenly, "I have it!"—so suddenly, indeed, that Miss Sarah spilt her cup, and her brother took three lumps of sugar instead of two.

"Have what?" they both exclaimed.

"Why," she said, "I was talking to-day with Mrs. Boniface, and she was saying how nice it would be if there was some one in the town who could mend toys—poor Miss Piper at the Bazaar being so useless, and all the carpenters understanding nothing but making bookshelves and cucumber-frames, and London being so far away—and I said, 'Yes,' never thinking of Theodore here. And, of course, it's the very thing for him."

"Of course," said Miss Sarah. "He could take the old billiard-room."

"And have a gas-stove put in it," said Miss Selina.

"An oil-stove," said Miss Sarah; "it's more economical."

"A gas-stove," said Miss Selina; "it's more trustworthy."

"And put up a bench," said Miss Sarah.

"And some cocoa-nut-matting on the floor," said Miss Selina.

"Linoleum," said Miss Sarah; "it's cheaper."

"Cocoa-nut-matting," said Miss Selina; "it's better and warmer for his feet."

"And we could call it the Dolls' Hospital," said Miss Sarah.

"Infirmary," said Miss Selina.

"I prefer Hospital," said Miss Sarah.

"Infirmary," said Miss Selina. "Dr. Bannister, house-surgeon, attends daily from ten till one."

"It would be the prettiest and kindest occupation," said Miss Sarah, "as well as a useful one."

"That's the whole point of it," said Miss Selina.

And that is how—five or six years ago—the Miss Bannisters' Brother came to open the Dolls' Infirmary. But he did not stop short at mending dolls. He mended all kinds of other things too; he

advised on the length of tails for kites ; he built ships ; he had even made fire-works.

## V

Roy walked into Dormstaple at about one o'clock, very tired and hot and dusty and hungry. With the exception of a lift for a mile and a half in the baker's cart, he had had to walk or run all the way. A little later, after asking his way more than once, he stood on the doorstep of the Miss Bannisters' house. The door was opened by old Eliza, and as the flavour of roast fowl rushed out, Roy knew how hungry he was. " I want to see the Miss Bannisters' Brother," he said, " please."

" You're too late," was the answer, " and it's the wrong door. Come to-morrow morning, and go to the Hinfirmary. Mr. Theodore never sees children in the afternoon."

" Oh, but I must," Roy almost sobbed.

“Chut, chut !” said old Eliza, “little boys shouldn’t say must.”

“But when they must, what else is there for them to say ?” Roy asked.

“Chut, chut !” said old Eliza again. “That’s himperent ! Now run away, and come to-morrow morning.”

This was too much for Roy. He covered his face with his hands, and really and truly cried—a thing he would scorn to do on his own account.

While he stood there in this distress a hand was placed on his arm and he was drawn gently into the house. He heard the door shut behind him. The hand then guided him along passages into a great room, and there he was liberated. Roy looked round ; it was the most fascinating room he had ever seen. There was a long bench at the window, with a comfortable chair before it, and on the bench were hammers and chisels and all kinds of tools. A ship nearly finished lay

in one place, a clockwork steamer in another, a pair of rails wound about the floor on the cocoa-nut matting—in and out like a snake—on which a toy train probably ran, and here and there were signals. On the shelves were coloured papers, bottles, boxes, and wire. In one corner was a huge kite, as high as a man, with a great face painted on it. Several dolls, more or less broken, lay on the table.

All this he saw in a moment. Then he looked at the owner of the hand, who had been standing beside him all the while with an amused expression on his delicate, kind face. Roy knew in an instant it was the Miss Bannisters' Brother.

“Well,” said the Miss Bannisters' Brother; “so when one must, one must?”

“Yes,” Roy said half timidly.

“Quite right too,” said the Miss Bannisters' Brother. “‘Must’ is a very good word, if one has the character to back it

up. And now tell me, quickly, what is the trouble? Something very small, I should think, or you wouldn't be able to carry it in your pocket."

"It's not in my pocket," Roy said; "it's not here at all. I want—I want a lesson."

"A lesson?" the Miss Bannisters' Brother asked in surprise.

"Yes, in eye-mending. When eyes fall inside and rattle, you know."

The Miss Bannisters' Brother sat down, and took Roy between his knees. There was something about this little dusty, nervous boy that his clients (often tearful enough) had never displayed before, and he wished to understand it. "Now tell me all about it," he said.

Roy told him everything, right from the first.

"And what is your father's name?" was the only question that had to be asked. When he heard this, the Miss Bannisters'

Brother rose. "You must stay here a minute," he said.

"But—but the lesson?" Roy exclaimed. "You know I ought to be getting back again. Christina——"

"All right, just a minute," the Miss Bannisters' Brother replied.

When the Miss Bannisters' Brother came back, Miss Selina came with him. "Come and get tidy. You are just in time for dinner," she said, "and afterwards we are going to drive home with you."

"Oh, but I can't stop for dinner!" Roy cried. "It's much too important to stop for dinner; I'm not really hungry, either."

"Dinner will only take a little while," said Miss Selina, "and the horses can be getting ready at the same time; and if you were to walk you wouldn't be home nearly so soon as you will if you drive, dinner-time included."

"Besides," said the Miss Bannisters'

Brother, "I'm much too hungry to give lessons. I need heaps of food—chicken and things—before I can give a lesson."

"But Christina——" Roy gasped again.

"And, as a matter of fact, we've thought of a better way than the lesson," Miss Selina said. "Mr. Bannister is going with you; but he must eat first, mustn't he?"

It took a moment for Roy to appreciate this, but when he did he was the happiest boy in Dormstaple.

He never tasted a nicer chicken, he said afterwards.

## VI

Certainly not more than three-quarters of an hour had passed before the carriage was on its way to Mapleton—with the Miss Bannisters' Brother propped up with cushions (for he could not bear the jolting of carriages) on the back seat, and Miss

Selina and Miss Sarah, who had come to look after him, on the other. Roy was on the box. You never saw such puzzled faces as the Dormstaple people had when the party went by, for the Miss Bannisters' Brother had not driven out these twenty years; but their surprise was nothing to that of old Eliza, who wandered about the rooms all the rest of the day muttering "Little himperent boy!"

At the Mapleton gates Roy jumped down and rushed up to the house. His mother came to the door as he reached it. "Oh, mother, mother," he cried, "he's come himself!"

"Who has come?" she asked, forgetting to say anything about Roy's long absence. "I hoped it was the doctor. Christina is worse, I'm afraid; she won't sleep."

"It's all right," Roy assured her. "I've brought the Miss Bannisters' Brother, who mends dolls and everything, and he'll put the eyes right in no time, and then

Crissie'll be well again. Here they are !”

At this moment the carriage reached the door ; but Mrs. Tiverton's perplexities were not removed by it. On the contrary, they were increased, for she saw before her three total strangers. Miss Selina, however, hastily stepped out and took Mrs. Tiverton's hand, and explained the whole story, adding, “ We are not coming in ; my sister and I have a call to pay a little further on. We shall come back in less than an hour for our brother, carry him off, and be no trouble at all. I know how little you must want just now even people that you know.” In spite of Mrs. Tiverton's protest, Miss Selina had her way, and the sisters drove off.

While this conversation had been in progress, Roy had been speaking to the Miss Bannisters' Brother. He had been preparing the speech ever since they had started, for it was very important.

"Please," he said—"please how much will this visit be, because I want to pay for it myself?"

The Miss Bannisters' Brother smiled. "But suppose you haven't enough?" he said.

"Oh, but I think I have!" Roy told him. "I've got seven-and-six, and when the vet. came to see Lord Roberts it was only five shillings."

The Miss Bannisters' Brother smiled again. "Our infirmary is rather peculiar," he said. "We don't take money at all; we take promises; different kinds of promises from different people, according to their means. We ask rich patients' friends to promise to give away old toys, or story-books, or scrap-books, or something of that kind, to real hospitals—children's hospitals. We find that much better than money. Money's such a nuisance. One is always losing the key of the money-box."

Roy was a little disappointed. "Oh yes!" he said, however, "I'll do that. Won't I just? But, you know," he added, "you can always break open a money-box if it comes to the worst. Pokers aren't bad. And there's a way of getting the money out with a table-knife."

It was just then that the Miss Bannisters drove off, and Mrs. Tiverton asked their brother to come to Christina's room with her. Roy would have given anything to have been allowed upstairs; but as it was forbidden, he went to see Jim and tell him the news. He found, however, that the housemaid had already told not only Jim but every one else.

"Now it will be all right," she was saying. "The Miss Bannisters' Brother will do it! Why, he made a wooden leg for a tame jackdaw once!"

## VII

Christina was moaning in the bed with Diana locked in her arms when the Miss Bannisters' Brother sat down beside her. "Come," he said gently, "let me feel your pulse."

Christina pushed her wrist towards him wearily.

"Oh no, not yours!" he said, with a little laugh. "Yours doesn't matter. I meant this little lady's. I'm not your doctor. I'm a doll's doctor."

Christina turned her poor flushed face towards him for the first time. A doll's doctor—it was a new idea. And he really seemed to be all right—not any one dressed up to make her feel foolish or coax her into taking horrid medicine. "Was it your carriage I heard?" she asked.

"Yes," he said. "I have come on purpose. But so many dolls are ill just

now that I must be getting away soon. It's quite a bad time for dolls, especially French ones. They are very delicate."

"Mine is French," Christina said, growing really interested.

"How very curious!" he answered. "I had a French patient the other day—a Parisian — whose sight had become so weak that she had to wear glasses. And now for the pulse," he went on, and he drew out a large gold watch.

Mrs. Tiverton was looking on with tears in her eyes. Christina had not taken this quiet interest in anything or kept so still in bed for many hours. Not even the sleeping draught had had any effect.

The Miss Bannisters' Brother held Diana's tiny wrist and looked very grave. "Dear, dear!" he said, "I ought to have been sent for before, and then I could have cured her here in your arms. As it is, I must take her to the light. Won't you have that nice jelly while I am treating

Miss——? Let me see, what is my patient's name?"

"Diana," Christina said.

"Ah, yes—Miss Diana. By the time you have finished the jelly I ought to have finished my visit." So saying he rose and carried Diana to the window-seat behind the curtains, while Mrs. Tiverton gave Christina the jelly. Christina took it, nurse said afterwards, like a lamb—though I never saw a lamb take jelly.

Meanwhile, the Miss Bannisters' Brother had taken some tools and a tube of seccotine from his pocket, and he had lifted up Diana's hair, cut a hole in her head, and was busily readjusting the machinery of her eyes. It was all done in five minutes, just as Christina was eating the last mouthful. "There," he said, returning to the bedside, "that's all right. It was a very simple operation, and didn't hurt at all. I think our patient can see now as well as ever."

Christina peered into Diana's face with a cry of joy, and sank back on the pillow in an ecstasy of content.

Neither Mrs. Tiverton nor the Miss Bannisters' Brother dared to move for some minutes. While they sat there the doctor tip-toed in. He crossed to the bed and looked at Christina. "She's asleep," he said. "Splendid! She's all right now. It was sleep she wanted more than anything. Don't let her hear a sound, nurse, for hours."

They found Roy waiting for the news. When he heard it he jumped for joy. His mother caught him up and hugged him. "You thoughtful little imp!" she cried—and, turning to the doctor, told him the story. He went off, laughing. "I shall take my door-plate down when I get home," he called out as he drove off, "and send it round to you, Bannister. You're the real doctor."

When the Miss Bannisters drove back

they found tea all ready, and Mrs. Tiverton would not hear of their leaving without it. And when they did leave, an hour later, they were all fast friends.

## VIII

Roy and Christina never think of going to Dormstaple now without calling at the red house.



## THE ANTI-BURGLARS



## THE ANTI-BURGLARS

### I

THE letter was addressed to Miss Mary Stavely. It ran :

“MY DEAR MARY,

“I have just received five pounds that I had given up for lost, and, remembering what you told me at Easter of the importance of distributing a little money in the village, I think you had better have it and become my almoner. An almoner is one who gives away money for another. I shall be interested in hearing how you get on.

“Your affectionate

“UNCLE HERBERT.”

Inside the letter was a five-pound note.

Mary read the letter for the twentieth time, and for the twentieth time unfolded the crackling five-pound note — more money than she had ever seen before. She was thirteen.

“But what shall I do with it?” she asked. “So many people want things.”

“Oh, you mustn’t ask me,” said her mother. “Uncle Herbert wants you to decide entirely for yourself. You must make a list of every one in the village who wants help, and then look into each case very carefully.”

“Yes,” said Harry, Mary’s brother, as he finished breakfast, “and don’t forget me. My bicycle ought to be put right, for one thing, and, for another, I haven’t any more films for my camera. If that isn’t a deserving case I’d like to know what is.”

## II

In a few days' time the list was ready.  
It ran like this :

	£	s.	d.
Mrs. Meadows' false teeth want mending.			
It can be done for ... ..	0	12	6
Tommy Pringle ought to go to a Nursing Home by the sea for three weeks. This costs 7s. a week and 5s. 4d. return fare ...	1	6	4
Old Mrs. Wigram really must have a new bonnet ... ..	0	4	6
Mrs. Ryan has been saving up for months to buy a sewing machine. She had it all ready, but Sarah's illness has taken away 10s. I should like to make that up ...	0	10	0
The little Barretts ought to have a real ball. It isn't any fun playing with a bit of wood ... ..	0	1	0
Mr. Eyles has broken his spectacles again ...	0	2	6
Old Mr. and Mrs. Snelling have never been in London, and they're both nearly eighty. I'm sure they ought to go. There is an excursion on the first of the month at 3s. return each, and their grandson's wife would look after them there. Fraser's cart to the station and back would be 4s.	0	10	0
Mrs. Callow will lose all her peas and cur- rants again if she doesn't have a net ...	0	3	0

	£	s.	d.
The schoolmaster says that the one thing that would get the boys to the village room is a gramophone like the one at the public-house. This is 15s., and twelve tunes for 9s.           ...           ...           ...	1	4	0
Mrs. Carter's mangle will cost 8s. to be mended, but it must be done           ...	0	8	0
Thomas Barnes' truck is no good any more, and his illness took away all the money he had; but he will never take it if he knows it comes from us           ...           ...	1	10	0

Mary read through her list and once more added up the figures. They came to £6 11s. 10d.

"Dear me!" she said, "I hadn't any idea it was so difficult to be an almoner."

She went through the list again, and brought it down to £5 os. 10d. by knocking off one week of Tommy Pringle's seaside holiday and depriving the village room of its gramophone.

"I suppose I must make up the tenpence myself," she said.

## III

That afternoon Mary went to call on Mr. Verney. Mr. Verney was an artist who lived at the forge cottage. He and Mary were great friends. She used to sit by him while he painted, and he played cricket with her and Harry and was very useful with a pocket-knife.

“No one,” she said to herself, “can help me so well as Mr. Verney, and if I decide myself on how the money is to be spent, it will be all right to get some help in spending it.”

Mr. Verney liked the scheme immensely. “But I don’t see that you want any help,” he said. “You have done it so far as well as possible.”

“Well,” said Mary, “there’s one great difficulty: Thomas Barnes would never take anything from our house. You see, we once had his son for a gardener, and

father had to send him away because of something he did; but though it was altogether his son's fault, Thomas Barnes has never spoken to father since, or even looked at him. But he's very old and poorly, and very lonely, and it's most important he should have a new hand-truck, because all his living depends on it; but it's frightfully important that he shouldn't know who gave it to him."

"Wouldn't he guess?" Mr. Verney said.

"Not if nobody knew."

"Oh, I see: no one is to know. That makes it much more fun."

"But how are we to do it?" Mary asked. "That's why I want you to help. Of course, we can post most of the money, but we can't post a truck. If Thomas Barnes knew, he'd send it back directly."

"Well," said Mr. Verney, after thinking for some time, "there's only one way: we shall have to be anti-burglars."

“ Anti-burglars !” cried Mary. “ What’s that ?”

“ Well, a burglar is some one who breaks into a house and takes things away ; an anti-burglar is some one who breaks into a house and leaves things there. Just the opposite, you see.”

“ But suppose we are caught ?”

“ That would be funny. I don’t know what the punishment for anti-burgling is. I think perhaps the owner of the house ought to be punished for being so foolish as to interrupt. But tell me more about Thomas Barnes.”

“ Thomas Barnes,” said Mary, “ lives in a cottage by the cross-roads all alone.”

“ What does he do ?”

“ He fetches things from the station for people ; he carries the washing home from Mrs. Carter’s ; he runs errands—at least, he doesn’t run them : people wish he would ; he sometimes does a day’s work in a garden. But he really must have a

new barrow, and his illness took all his money away, because he wouldn't belong to a club. He's quite the most obstinate man in this part of the country. But he's so lonely, you know."

"Then," said Mr. Verney, "we must wait till he goes away on an errand."

"But he locks his shed."

"Then we must break in."

"But if people saw us taking the barrow there?"

"Then we must go in the night. I'll send him to Westerfield suddenly for something quite late—some medicine, and then he'll think I'm ill—on a Thursday, when there's the midnight train, and we'll pop down to his place at about eleven with a screw-driver and things."

After arranging to go to Westerfield as soon as possible to spend their money, Mary ran home.

Being an almoner was becoming much more interesting.

## IV

Mr. Verney and Mary went to Westerfield the next day, leaving a very sulky Harry behind.

"I can't think why Uncle Herbert didn't send that money to me," he grumbled. "Why should a girl like Mary have all this almoning fun? I could almon as well as she can."

As a matter of fact, Uncle Herbert had made a very wise choice. Harry had none of Mary's interest in the village, nor had he any of her patience. But in his own way he was a very clever boy. He bowled straight, and knew a linnet's egg from a greenfinch's.

Mr. Verney and Mary's first visit was to the bank, where Mary handed her five-pound note through the bars, and the clerk scooped up four sovereigns and two half-sovereigns in his little copper shovel and poured them into her hand.

Then they bought a penny account-book and went on to Mr. Flower, the ironmonger, to see about Thomas Barnes' truck. Mr. Flower had a secondhand one for twenty-five shillings, and he promised to touch it up for two shillings more; and he promised, also, that neither he nor his man should ever say anything about it. It was arranged that the barrow should be wrapped up in sacking and taken to Mr. Verney's, inside the waggon, and be delivered after dark.

"Why do *you* want it?" Mary asked him.

"That's a secret," he said; "you'll know later."

Mr. Flower also undertook to send three shillings' worth of netting to Mrs. Callow, asking her to do him the favour of trying it to see if it were a good strong kind.

Mary and Mr. Verney then walked on to Mr. Costall, the dentist, who was in Westerfield only on Thursdays between

ten and four. It was the first time that Mary had ever stood on his doorstep without feeling her heart sink. Mr. Costall, although a dentist, was a smiling, happy man, and he entered into the scheme directly. He said he would write to Mrs. Meadows and ask her to call, saying that some one whom he would not mention had arranged the matter with him. And when Mary asked him how much she should pay him, he said that ten shillings would do. This meant a saving of half a crown.

“How nice it would be always to visit Mr. Costall,” Mary said, with a sigh, “if he did not pull out teeth.”

Mary and Mr. Verney then chose Mrs. Wigram’s new bonnet, which they posted to her at once. Mr. Verney liked one with red roses, but Mary told him that nothing would ever induce Mrs. Wigram to wear anything but black. The girl in the shop recommended another kind,

trimmed with a very blue bird ; but Mary had her own way.

Afterwards they bought a ball for the Barretts ; and then they bought a postal order for eight shillings for Mrs. Carter, and half a crown for Mr. Eyles, and ten shillings for Mrs. Ryan, and fourteen shillings for Mrs. Pringle. It was most melancholy to see the beautiful sovereigns dropping into other people's tills. Mary put all these amounts down in her penny account-book. She also put down the cost of her return ticket.

When they got back to the village they saw Mr. Ward, the station-master. After telling him how important it was to keep the secret, Mary bought a return ticket to the sea for Tommy Pringle, without any date on it, and two excursion tickets for old Mr. and Mrs. Snelling for the 1st of next month. Mr. Ward did not have many secrets in his life, and he was delighted to keep these.

While they were talking to him a curious and exciting thing happened. A message began to tick off on the telegraph machine. Mr. Verney was just turning to go away when Mr. Ward called out, "Stop a minute, please! This message is for Miss Stavely."

Mary ran over to the machine and stood by Mr. Ward while he wrote down the message which the little needle ticked out. She had never had a telegram before, and to have one like this—"warm from the cow," as Mr. Ward said—was splendid. Mr. Ward handed it to her at last.

"MARY STAVELY, MERCOMBE.

"How is the almoning? I want to pay all extra expenses.—UNCLE HERBERT."

The reply was paid; but Mary had to write it out several times before it satisfied

her and came within the sixpence. This was what she said :

“STAVELY, REFORM CLUB, LONDON.

“All right. Will send accounts. Expenses small.—MARY.”

On the way home they spoke to Fraser, who let out carriages and carts. Fraser liked the plan as much as every one else did. He promised to call in on the Snellings in a casual way, on the morning on which they would receive the tickets, and suggest to them that they should let him drive them to the station and bring them home again. When Mary offered to pay him, Mr. Fraser said no, certainly not ; he would like to help her. He hadn't done anything for anybody for so long that he should be interested in seeing what it felt like. This meant a saving of four shillings.

Mary went to tea at Mr. Verney's.

After tea he printed addresses on a number of envelopes, and put the postal orders inside, with a little card in each, on which he printed the words, "From a friend, for Tommy to go to the sea-side home for a fortnight"; "From a friend, for Mr. and Mrs. Snelling to go to London"; "From a friend, for Mr. Eyles' spectacles," and so forth, and then he stamped them and stuck them down, and put them all into a big envelope, which he posted to his sister in Ireland, so that when they came back they all had the Dublin postmark, and no one ever saw such puzzled and happy people as the recipients were.

"Has your mother any friends in Dublin, Miss Mary?" Mrs. Snelling asked a day or so later, in the midst of a conversation about sweet peas.

"No," said Mary. It was not until afterwards that she saw what Mrs. Snelling meant.

## V

Next Thursday came at last, the day on which Thomas Barnes' shed was to be anti-burgled. At ten o'clock, having had leave to stay up late on this great occasion, Mary put on her things, and Mr. Verney, who had come to dinner, took her to his rooms. There, in the outhouse which he used for a studio, he showed her the truck.

"And here," he said, "is my secret," pointing out the words—

THOMAS BARNES,  
PORTER, MERCOMBE.

which he had painted in white letters on the side.

"He's bound to keep it now, whatever happens," Mr. Verney said. "In order to make as little noise as possible to-night," he added, "I have wrapped felt round the tyres."

He then took a bag from the shelf,

placed it on the barrow, and they stole out. Mr. Verney's landlady had gone to bed, and there was no sound of anyone in the village. The truck made no noise.

After half a mile they came to the cross-roads where Thomas Barnes' cottage stood, and Mr. Verney walked to the house and knocked loudly.

There was no answer. Indeed, he had not expected one, but he wished to make sure that Thomas had not returned from Westerfield sooner than he should.

"It's all right," he whispered. "Now for the anti-burgling."

He wheeled the truck to the side of the gate leading to the shed, and, taking the bag, they passed through. Mr. Verney opened the bag and took out a lantern, a hammer, and a screw-driver.

"We must get this padlock off," he

said, and while Mary held the lantern he worked away at the fastenings. It was more difficult than he expected, especially as he did not want to break anything, but to put it back exactly as it had been. Several minutes passed.

“There,” he cried ; “that’s it.”

At the same moment a sound of heavy footsteps was heard, and Mary gave a little scream and dropped the lantern.

A strong hand gripped her arm.

“Hullo ! Hullo !” said a gruff voice. “What’s this ? Housebreaking, indeed !”

Mr. Verney had stooped for the lantern, and as he rose the policeman—for he it was—seized him also.

“You’d better come along with me,” the policeman said, “and make no trouble about it. The less trouble you make, the easier it’ll be for you before the magistrates.”



WHILE MARY HELD THE LANTERN, HE WORKED AWAY AT  
THE FASTENINGS.



“But look here,” Mr. Verney said, “you’re making a mistake. We’re not housebreaking.”

The policeman laughed. “Now, that’s a good ’un,” he said. “Dark lantern, screw-driver, hammer, eleven o’clock at night, Thomas Barnes’ shed—and you’re not housebreaking! Perhaps you’ll tell me what you are doing, you and your audacious female accomplice here. Playing hide-and-seek, I suppose?”

“Well,” said Mr. Verney, suddenly striking a match with his free hand, and holding it up so that the light fell full on his own and on Mary’s face, “we’ll tell you the whole story.”

“Miss Stavely!” cried the policeman, “and Mr. Verney. Well, this is a start. But what does it all mean?”

Then Mr. Verney told the story, first making Dobbs promise not to tell it again.

The policeman grew more and more

interested as it went on. Finally he exclaimed: "You get the door open, sir, and I'll fetch the truck through. Time's getting along."

He hurried out of the yard and returned carrying the truck on his shoulders. Then he stripped off the felt with his knife and ran it into the shed, beside the old broken-down barrow that had done service for so many years.

Mr. Verney soon had the padlock back in its place as if nothing had happened, and after carefully gathering up the felt they hurried off, in order to get home before Thomas Barnes should call with the medicine that he had been sent to buy.

"Let me carry the bag, sir," the policeman said.

"What, full of burgling tools!" said Mr. Verney.

"Mum's the word," the policeman replied, "mum's the word."

At the forge cottage he wished them good night.

"Then you don't want us in court to-morrow?" Mr. Verney asked.

"Mum's the word," was all that Dobbs replied, with a chuckle.

Thomas Barnes' train being late, Mary did not get to bed until after twelve that night. She laid her head on the pillow with particular satisfaction, for the last and most difficult part of the distribution of Uncle Herbert's money was over.

## VI

The next day Mary sent Uncle Herbert a long description of her duties as his almoner, and enclosed the account. What with postages and her railway fare, she had spent altogether £4 18s. 11d.

Two days later this letter came back from Uncle Herbert :

“DEAR MARY,

“You are as good an almoner as I could wish, and I hope that another chance of setting you to work will come. Put the thirteen pence that are over in a box labelled ‘The Almoner’s Fund.’ Then take the enclosed postal order for a pound and get it cashed, and the next time you are in Westerfield buy Mr. Verney a box of cigarettes, but be sure to find out first what kind he likes. Also give Harry six shillings. I dare say he has broken his bicycle or wants some more films: at any rate, he will not say no. The rest is for yourself to buy something purely for yourself with. Please tell your mother that I am coming on Saturday by the train reaching you at 5.8. I shall walk from the station, but I want Thomas Barnes to fetch my bag.

“Your affectionate

“UNCLE HERBERT.”

Whether or no Thomas Barnes knew where the truck came from we never found out; but at Christmas-time he was discovered among the waits who sang carols on the Stavelys' lawn.



SIR FRANKLIN AND THE LITTLE  
MOTHERS



## SIR FRANKLIN AND THE LITTLE MOTHERS

### I

ONCE upon a time there was a very rich gentleman named Sir Franklin Ingleside, who lived all alone in a beautiful house in Berkeley Square. He was so rich that he could not possibly spend more than a little of his money, although he gave great sums away, and had horses and carriages, and bought old pictures and new books.

He lived very quietly, rode a little, drove a little, called on old friends (chiefly old ladies), usually dined alone, and afterwards read by the fire.

Although the house was large and full of servants, all Sir Franklin's wants were

supplied by his own particular man, Pembroke. Pembroke was clean-shaven, very neat, spoke quietly, and never grew any older or seemed ever to have been any younger. It was impossible to think of Pembroke as a baby, or a boy, or a person with a Christian name. One could think of him only as a grave man named Pembroke. No one ever saw him smile in Berkeley Square, but a page boy once came home with the news that he had passed Mr. Pembroke talking to a man in the street at Islington, and heard him laugh out loud. But page boys like inventing impossible stories, and making your flesh creep.

Pembroke lived in a little room communicating by bells with all the rooms which Sir Franklin used ; so that whenever the bell rang Pembroke knew exactly where his master was. Pembroke did not seem to have any life but his master's ; and the one thing about which he was

always thinking was how to know beforehand exactly what his master wanted. Pembroke became so clever at this that he would often, after being rung for, enter the room carrying the very thing that Sir Franklin was going to request him to get.

Sir Franklin once asked him how he did it, and Pembroke said that he did not know ; but part of the secret was explained that very year quite by chance. It was like this. In the autumn Sir Franklin and Pembroke always went to Scotland, and that year when they were in Scotland the Berkeley Square house was done up and all the old pull-bells were taken away and new electric ones were put in instead. When Sir Franklin came back again he noticed that Pembroke was not nearly so clever in anticipating needs as he had been before ; and when he asked him about it, Pembroke said : “ My opinion, sir, is that it's all along of the bells. The new bells,

which you press, ring the same, however you press them, and startle a body too, whereas the old bells, which you used to pull, sir, told me what you wanted by the way you pulled them, and never startled one at all."

So Sir Franklin and Pembroke went to Paris for a week while the new press bells were taken away and the old pull bells put back again, and then Pembroke became again just as clever as before. (But that was, of course, only part of the secret.)

## II

It was at a quarter to nine on the evening of December 18, 1907, that Sir Franklin, who was sitting by the fire reading and thinking, suddenly got up and rang the bell.

Pembroke came in at once and said, "I'm sorry you're troubled in your mind, sir. Perhaps I can be of some assistance."

"I'm afraid not," said Sir Franklin.

"But do you know what day this is?"

"We are nearing the end of December 18," said Pembroke.

"Yes," said Sir Franklin, "and what is a week to-day?"

"A week to-day, sir," said Pembroke, "is Christmas Day."

"And what about children who won't get any presents this Christmas?" Sir Franklin asked.

"Ah, indeed, sir," said Pembroke.

"And what about people in trouble, Pembroke?" Sir Franklin asked.

"Ah, indeed, sir," said Pembroke.

"And that reminds me," Pembroke added after a pause, "that I was going to speak to you about the cook's brother-in-law, sir: a worthy man, sir, but in difficulties."

Sir Franklin asked for particulars.

"He keeps a toy-shop, sir, in London, and he can't make it pay. He's tried and

tried, but there's no money in toys in his neighbourhood—except penny toys, on which the margin of profit is, I am told, sir, very small."

Sir Franklin poked the fire and looked into it for a little while. Then, "It seems to me, Pembroke," he said, "that the cook's brother-in-law's difficulties and the little matter of the children can be solved in the same action. Why shouldn't we take over the toy-shop and let the children into it on Christmas Eve to choose what they will?"

Pembroke stroked his chin for a moment and then said, "The very thing, sir."

"Where does the cook's brother-in-law live?" Sir Franklin asked.

Pembroke gave the address.

"Then if you'll call a hansom, Pembroke, we'll drive there at once."

## III

It does not matter at all about the visit which Sir Franklin Ingleside and Pembroke paid to the cook's brother-in-law. All that need be said is that the cook's brother-in-law was quite willing to sell Sir Franklin his stock-in-trade and to make the shop over to him, and Sir Franklin Ingleside rode back to Berkeley Square not only a gentleman who had horses and carriages and who bought old pictures and new books, but perhaps the first gentleman in Berkeley Square to have a toy-shop too.

On the way back he talked to Pembroke about his plans.

"There's a kind of child, Pembroke," said Sir Franklin, "that I particularly want to encourage and reward. It is clear that we can't give presents to all; and I don't want the greedy ones and the

strongest ones to be as fortunate as the modest ones and the weak ones. So my plan is, first of all to make sure that the kind of child that I have in mind is properly looked after, and then to give the others what remains. And the particular children I mean are the little girls who take care of their younger brothers and sisters while their parents are busy, and who go to the shops and stalls and do the marketing. Whenever I see one I always say to myself, 'There goes a Little Mother!' and it is the Little Mothers whom this Christmas we must particularly help.

"Now what you must do, Pembroke, during the next few days, is to make a list of the streets in every direction within a quarter of a mile of the toy-shop, and then find out, from the schoolmistresses, and the butchers, and the publicans' wives, and the grocers, and the oil-shops, and the greengrocers, and the more talkative

women on the doorsteps, which are the best Little Mothers in the district and what is the size of their families, and get their names and addresses. And then we shall know what to do."

By this time the cab had reached Berkeley Square again, and Sir Franklin returned to his books.

#### IV

The next few days were the busiest and most perplexing that Pembroke ever spent. He was in Clerkenwell, where the toy-shop was situated, from morning till night. He bought all kinds of things that he did not want — cheese and celery, mutton-chops and beer, butter and paraffin—just to get on terms with the people who know about the Little Mothers.

Although naturally rather silent and reserved, he talked to butchers and bakers and women on doorsteps, and school-

mistresses, and even hot-potato men, as if they were the best company in the world, and bit by bit he made a list of twenty-two Little Mothers of first-class merit, and fifty-one of second-class merit, and all their children.

Having got these down in his book, Pembroke was going home on the evening of the 21st very well pleased with himself on the whole, but still feeling that Sir Franklin would be disappointed not to have the name of the best Little Mother of all, when an odd thing happened. He had stopped in a doorway not very far from the toy-shop, to light his pipe, when he heard a shrill voice saying very decidedly, "Very well, then, William Kitchener Beacon, if that's your determination you shall stay here all night, and by and by the rats will come out and bite you."

Pembroke stood still and listened.

"I don't want to go home," a childish





A LITTLE PROCESSION PASSED THE DOORWAY.

voice whimpered. "I want to look in the shops."

"Come home you must and shall," said the other. "Here's Lucy tired out, and Amy crying, and John cold to his very marrer, and Tommy with a sawreel, and father'll want his dinner, and mother'll think we're all run over by a motor-car; and come home you must and shall."

Sounds of a scuffle followed, and then a little procession passed the doorway. First came a sturdy little girl of about ten, carrying a huge string-basket filled with heavy things, and pulling behind her by the other hand a small and sulky boy, whom Pembroke took to be William Kitchener Beacon. Then came the others, and lastly Tommy, limping with the sore heel.

Pembroke stopped the girl with the bag, and asked her if she lived far away, and finding that it was close to the toy-shop, he said he should like to carry the

bag, and help the family home. He was not allowed to carry the bag, but no objection was raised to his lifting Tommy on his back, and they all went home together.

On the way he discovered that the Little Mother was named Matilda Beacon, and that she lived at 28, Pulvercake Buildings, Clerkenwell.

She was nine years old, an age when most of you are still running to your nurses to have this and that done for you. But Matilda, in addition to doing everything for herself very quietly and well, had also to do most things for her mother, who went out charing every day, except Sunday, and for her brothers and sisters, of whom she had five—three brothers aged seven, six, and three, and two sisters, who were twins and both five. Matilda got them up and put them to bed; picked them up when they fell, and dried their tears; separated them when they quar-

relled, which was very often ; bought their food and cooked it, and gave it to them, and saw that they did not eat too fast ; and was, in short, the absolute mistress of the very tiny flat where the Beacons lived.

Mr. Beacon worked on the line at St. Pancras, and if he was late home, as he very often was, Mrs. Beacon was always sure that he had been run over by a passing train and cut into several pieces ; so that in addition to all her other work Matilda had also to comfort her mother.

The next day, when he came again to the toy-shop district, Pembroke was delighted to find that by general consent Matilda Beacon was considered to be the best Little Mother in Clerkenwell ; but who do you think came next in public opinion ? Not Carrie Tompsett, although she had several strong backers ; and not Lou Miller, although she had her supporters too, and was really a very good little thing, with an enormous family on

her hands. No, it was neither of these. Indeed, it was not a Little Mother at all, so I don't see how you could have guessed. It was a "Little Father." It was generally agreed by the butchers and bakers and oilmen and hot-potato men and publicans and the women on the doorsteps, that the best Little Mother next to Matilda Beacon was Artie Gillam, who, since his mother had died last year and his father had not yet married again, had the charge of four sisters and two brothers.

All these things Pembroke reported to his master; and Sir Franklin was so much interested in hearing about Matilda Beacon that he told Pembroke to arrange so that Mrs. Beacon might stay at home one day and let Matilda come to see him. So Matilda put on her best hat and came down from Clerkenwell to Berkeley Square on the blue bus that runs between Highbury and Walham Green.

## V

When the splendid great door was opened by a tall and handsome footman Matilda clung to Pembroke as if he were her only friend in the world, as, indeed, he really seemed to be at that moment in that house. She had never seen anything so grand before ; and after all, it is rather striking for a little girl of nine who has all her life been managing a large family in two small rooms in Clerkenwell, to be brought suddenly into a mansion in Berkeley Square to speak to a gentleman with a title. Not that a gentleman with a title is necessarily any more dreadful than a policeman ; but Matilda knew several policemen quite intimately, and was, therefore, no longer afraid of them, although she still found their terribleness useful when her little brothers and sisters were naughty. "I'll fetch a policeman to you !" she used to

say, and sometimes actually would go downstairs a little way to do so and come back stamping her feet ; and this always had the effect of making them good again.

Sir Franklin was sitting in the library with a tea-table by his side set for two, and directly Matilda had dared to shake his hand he told Pembroke to bring the tea.

Matilda could not take her eyes from the shelves of books which ran all round the room. She did not quite know whether it might not be a book-shop and Sir Franklin a grand kind of bookseller ; and then she looked at the walls and wondered if it was a picture-shop ; and she made a note in her mind to ask Mr. Pembroke.

Her thoughts were brought back by Pembroke bringing in a silver tea-pot and silver kettle, which he placed over a spirit lamp ; and then Sir Franklin asked her if she took sugar.

(If she took sugar ? What a question !)

She said, "Yes, please, sir," very nicely, and Sir Franklin handed her the basin.

Would she have bread and butter or cake ? he asked next.

(Or cake ? What a question again !)

She said she would like cake, and she watched very carefully to see how Sir Franklin ate his, and at first did the same ; but when after two very small bites he laid it down and did not pick it up again, Matilda very sensibly ceased to copy him.

When they had finished tea and had talked about various things that did not matter, Sir Franklin asked her suddenly, "How would you like to keep shop, Matilda ?"

Matilda gasped. "What sort of a shop ?" she asked at last.

"A toy-shop," said Sir Franklin.

"Oh, but I couldn't," she said.

"Only for one day," Sir Franklin added.

“One day !” Her eager eyes glistened. “But what about Tommy and Willy and the twins ?”

“Your mother would stay at home that day and look after them. That could easily be arranged.

“You see,” Sir Franklin went on, “I want to give all the children in your street and in several other streets near it a Christmas present, and it is thought that the best way is to open a toy-shop for the purpose. But it is necessary that the toy-shop keeper should know most of the children and should be a capable woman of business, and that is why I ask you. The salary will be a sovereign ; the hours will be from two to eight, with an interval for tea ; and you shall have Mr. Pembroke to help you.”

Matilda did not know how to keep still, and yet there was the least shade of disappointment, or at least perplexity, on her face.

"Is it all right?" Sir Franklin asked.

"Ye-e-s," said Matilda.

"Nothing you want to say?"

"No-o-o," said Matilda; "I don't think so."

And yet it was very clear that something troubled her a little.

Sir Franklin was so puzzled by it that he went out to consult Pembroke. Pembroke explained the matter in a moment.

"I ought to have said," Sir Franklin remarked at once on returning, "that the shopkeeper, although a capable business woman, may play at being a little girl, too, if she likes, and will find a doll and a work-basket for herself, and even sweets too, just like the others."

Matilda's face at once became nothing but smiles.

"You will want a foreman," Sir Franklin then said.

"Yes," said Matilda, who would have said yes to anything by this time.

“Well, who will you have?”

“I don’t think Tommy would do,” said Matilda. “He’s that thoughtless. And Willy’s too small.”

“How about Frederick?” said Sir Franklin, ringing the bell twice.

Matilda sat still and waited, wondering who Frederick was.

After a moment or two the door opened, and a very smart boy, all over buttons, came in. “You can take away the tea-things,” said Sir Franklin.

“That was Frederick,” said Sir Franklin, when the boy had gone.

“Oh!” said Matilda.

“Would he do for foreman?” Sir Franklin asked.

Matilda hesitated. She would have preferred some one she knew, but she did not like to say so.

“Too buttony?” suggested Sir Franklin.

Matilda agreed.

“Then,” said Sir Franklin, “is there anyone you know?”

“I think Artie Gillam——” said Matilda.

“Very well, then,” said Sir Franklin, “it shall be Artie Gillam. His wages will be ten shillings.”

And thus everything was settled, and Matilda was sent home with Frederick the page boy, the happiest and most responsible Little Mother in London, with an armful of good things for the family.

## VI

Meanwhile Pembroke had been to Houndsditch buying quantities of new toys : for every Little Mother a large doll and a work-basket, and smaller dolls and other toys for the others, together with sweets and oranges and all kinds of other things, and everything was ready by the day before Christmas Eve, and all the tickets were distributed.

The tickets were Pembroke’s idea,

because one difficulty about opening a free toy-shop in a poor district of London for one day only is that even the invited children, not having had your opportunities of being brought up nicely and learning good manners, are apt to push and struggle to get in out of their turn, and perhaps even to try to get in twice, while there would be trouble, too, from the children who did not belong to the district. Pembroke knew this, and thought a good deal about the way to manage it so that there should be no crowding or difficulty. In the end Sir Franklin engaged a large hall, to which all the children were to come with their tickets, and from this hall they were to visit the shop in little companies of ten, make their choice of toys, and then go straight home. Of course, a certain number of other children would gather round the shop, but that could not be helped, and perhaps at the close of the afternoon, when all the others had been

looked after, they might be let in to choose what was left. And in this state were the things the night before Christmas Eve.

## VII

Pembroke managed everything so well that the great day went off without a hitch. At half-past two the Little Mothers with their families began to arrive, and they were sent off to the shop in companies of ten or thereabouts, two or three families at once. A couple of friendly policemen kept the crowd away from the shop, so that the children had plenty of time and quiet to choose what they wanted.

All the Little Mothers, as I have said, had each a doll and a work-basket; but the younger children might make their choice of two things each, and take two things for any little brother or sister who could not come—Clerkenwell being full

of little boys and girls who are not very well.

When they were chosen, Artie Gillam wrapped them up, and off the children went to make room for others.

Matilda was a splendid shopkeeper. She helped the smaller children to choose things in a way that might be a real lesson to real keepers of toy-shops, who always seem tired.

“Now then, Lizzie Hatchett,” she said, “you don’t want that jack-in-the-box. What’s the good of a jack-in-the-box to you if your brother’s got one? One in a family’s plenty. Better have this parasol : it lasts longer and is much more useful.

“Here’s a nice woolly lamb for Jenny Rogers’s baby brother,” she cried, taking away a monkey on a stick. “He’ll only suck the paint off that and be deathly ill.

“Now, Tommy Williams, don’t bother about those ninepins. Here’s a clockwork

mouse I've been keeping for you." And so on. Matilda's bright, quick eyes were everywhere.

Only one or two uninvited children squeezed in with the others. One of these was a very determined little rascal, who actually got in twice. The first time he went away not only with toys of his own, but with something for a quite imaginary brother with whooping-cough. This made him so bold that he hurried away and fought another little boy in the next street and took away his coat and cap. The coat was red and the cap had flaps for the ears, so that they made him look quite different. Wearing these, he managed to mix with the next little party coming from the hall. But he had forgotten one thing, and that was that the little boy whom he had fought was Artie Gillam's cousin. Artie at once recognized both the cap and the coat, and told Mr. Pembroke, and Mr. Pembroke told one of

the policemen, who marched into the shop, looking exceedingly fierce, and seizing the interloper by the arm, asked him whose coat he had on. At this the boy began to cry, and said he would never do it again. But it was too late. The policeman took hold of his wrist and marched him out of the shop and through all the other children in the street, who followed them in a procession, to the home of Artie's cousin, and there he had to give back the coat. Then he was allowed to go, because Artie's cousin's father was out, and Artie's cousin's mother (who was Artie's aunt) was not at all the kind of woman to thrash little boys.

So the time went on until all the children in Pembroke's list had got their toys and the hall was empty, and then the many others who had been waiting outside were let in, one by one, until all the toys were gone, and the policemen sent the rest away.

"Now," said Pembroke, "we must shut

the shop.” So Artie Gillam went outside and put up the shutters, and Matilda put on her jacket and hat.

Then Pembroke took some money out of his pocket to pay the manager and her foreman their salaries.

“How will you have it?” he said to Matilda.

“Please I don’t know what you mean,” Matilda replied.

“Gold or silver?” Pembroke explained.

Matilda had never seen gold yet, except in jewellers’ windows. Her mother’s wedding - ring was silver. “Oh, gold, please,” she gasped.

“One sovereign or two halves?” Pembroke asked.

“Two halves,” Matilda said.

Pembroke gave them to her.

Artie Gillam, on the other hand, wanted his ten shillings in as many coins as he could have, and his pocket was quite heavy with it.

"And now," said Pembroke, "I suppose you're going home. Be careful of your money on the way."

"Oh no," said Matilda, "I'm not going home yet. I've got some shopping to do."

"To-morrow's dinner?" Pembroke suggested.

"No," said Matilda mysteriously. "That's all bought. Father won a goose in the Goose Club."

"Then what are you going to buy?" Pembroke asked, for he wished to take as long and full a story home to Sir Franklin as might be.

"I'm going shopping for myself," said Matilda. "I'm going to buy some Christmas presents."

"May I come with you?" Pembroke asked.

"Oh yes, please, I want you to. I'm only going to spend one of these half-sovereigns. The other I shall put away. But I must buy something for mother, and

something for father, and I want to buy something else, too, for somebody else."

So Pembroke and Matilda and Artie, having turned out the gas and locked up the shop, which, however, now contained nothing whatever but paper and string and straw, walked off to the shops.

They first went into a draper's, where Matilda looked at some shawls and bought a nice thick woollen one for her mother, and also a pair of grey wool mittens for her father. These came to five-and-six.

Then they went to an ironmonger's and bought a cover for a plate to keep things warm, which Matilda said was for her father's dinner, because he was often late while her mother thought he was being cut in pieces. This cost ninepence.

Then they went to a tobacconist's and bought a pipe with a silver band on it, and two ounces of tobacco. These came to one-and-fourpence and were also for her father.

Then they went to a china-shop and bought a hot-water bottle for a shilling. "That," said Matilda, "is for the old woman next door to us, who nursed mother when she was ill. She can't sleep at night because her feet are so cold."

"And now," said Pembroke, "it's my turn," and he took the children into a greengrocer's shop and bought a shilling's worth of holly and mistletoe for each of them. "If you like," he said, "I will carry this home for you."

Matilda thanked him very heartily, but said that she still had one more present she must buy, and led the way to a little fancy shop, kept by an old maid.

"Please," said Matilda, "I want a kettle-holder."

The old lady took out a drawer and laid it on the counter. It was full of kettle-holders, some made in wool-work, others in patch-work. Matilda looked at them very carefully one by one, and at last chose

one in scarlet and bright yellow wool-work. When it was done up in a neat little packet and she had paid for it—six-pence—she handed it to Pembroke.

“That,” she said, “is a present for the gentleman. When I had tea with him I noticed that he hadn’t got one, and of course every family ought to have a kettle-holder. I should have liked to make one for him myself, but there hasn’t been time.”

## VIII

Sir Franklin Ingleside did not use the kettle-holder. He hung it on a nail by the fire-place, and whenever he is asked about it, or people smile at its very striking colours, he says, “I value that very highly; that is the profit that I made out of a toy-shop which I once kept.”



# THE GARDENS AND THE NILE



## THE GARDENS AND THE NILE

### THE STORY OF SPEKE

IN Kensington Gardens, close to Lancaster Gate, there rises from the grass beside the path leading direct to "Physical Energy" a column of red granite, bearing the words "In Memory of Speke. Victoria Nyanza and the Nile. 1864." Anyone curious enough to stand for a while near this column and listen to the nurses and children who pass would hear some strange suggestions as to why the column is there, and who or what Speke was ; but for the most part the answer to the question is : "I don't know," or, "How should I know ?" or, "Inquire of your pa" ; or, by the more daring, "Speke was a great man."

“Yes, but what kind of a great man? What did he do?”

“Do? Oh! [airily] he did great things. That’s why he has a monument—monuments are put up only to great men.”

“Yes, nurse, but do tell me what Speke did?”

“That I shan’t now. I might have done if you hadn’t worried me so. But I’ll tell you what he didn’t do: he didn’t ask questions all day long. No great man ever did.”

That evening, perhaps, just before bedtime, the same question will be repeated at home.

“Father, who is Speke?”

“Speke?”

“Yes, there’s a monument in the Gardens in memory of Speke.”

“A very unsuitable inscription, I think. Bad advice. Little boys—yes, and little girls too—should be seen and not heard. I would rather it said ‘In honour of not



"YES, NURSE, BUT DO TELL ME WHAT SPEKE DID?"



speaking.'” (This father, you see, was one of the funny fathers who think that children want only to laugh.)

“No, father, not S-P-E-A-K ; S-P-E-K-E.”

“Oh, Speke!—yes, of course, well, Speke—Speke was a great man.”

“Nurse said that, father. But what did he do?”

“Do? Oh, he was a great, great Englishman! A very noble life. That’s why he has a monument. Monuments, you know, are raised only to the great. You have seen the Albert Memorial, and the statue of the Duke of Wellington at Hyde Park Corner?”

“Yes, father, but do tell me what Speke did?”

“Speke—my dear child, do you know what the time is? It’s twenty to eight. You ought to have been upstairs for ten minutes. Good-night. Sleep well.”

The result is that for several years the children of Bayswater and Kensington have

had to invent stories of Speke for themselves. They know in a vague way that he was a traveller, because of the other words on the monument; but that is all. They don't know whether he was young or old; whether he travelled in 1864, or died in 1864. Some of them, the smaller ones, connecting Victoria Nyanza in some way with Queen Victoria, think of Speke as something to do with Kensington Gardens—perhaps he was the head gardener, they think, or the man who planted the trees. To others the word Nile on the column suggests thoughts of Moses in the bulrushes, and Pharaoh and the Israelites.

Meanwhile, who was Speke?

I will tell you.

John Hanning Speke was born on May 4, 1827, at Jordans, near Ilchester, in Somersetshire. That was the year when it was first observed that Englishmen walked with their hands in their pockets. Speke's father was a cap-

tain in the 14th Dragoons, and the son was brought up to be a soldier too ; and in 1844, when he was seventeen, he entered the army, and went to the Punjab in India, where he fought in several battles and became a lieutenant. Any time he could get from active service he spent in exploring the Himalayas and in hunting wild beasts and looking for rare plants and fossils.

In 1854, when his ten years in India were over, he went to Africa in order to carry out his pet scheme of exploring the centre of that Continent, which was then almost unknown. Before, however, he could get to work properly the Crimean War broke out, and he at once volunteered for service there and fought very gallantly ; and then, in 1856, he really began again upon Africa in earnest, in company with another intrepid traveller, Sir Richard Burton, the wonderful man who made the pilgrimage to Mecca disguised so

cleverly as a Mohamedan that he was not discovered. Had he been he would have been killed at once.

The particular ambition of Burton and Speke was to trace the river Nile back to its source in the mysterious heart of the Mountains of the Moon.

Has it ever occurred to you that every river has a source—that every river begins somewhere, in a tiny spring? Few forms of exploration are more interesting than to trace a stream back to its first drop. The Thames, for example, begins in the Cotswold Hills—the merest little trickle. All running water, you know, sooner or later reaches the sea. That little trickle in the Cotswolds will in time glide past Henley and Hampton Court and Westminster Bridge, and past the Tower, and help to bear up the thousands of vessels in the Port of London, and at last will run out into the sea at Gravesend. Some day perhaps you will walk up the banks of

the Upper Thames until you come to the Cotswold spring.

But of course a river, although we speak of its having one source, has others too. Many streams run into the Thames, and each of these has also its source. There is one, indeed, close to Speke's monument—the Westbourne, which gives its name to Westbourne Grove, where Whiteley's is. The West Bourne, like all the little London rivers, now runs underground, but it used to be open a hundred and more years ago. The West Bourne rises near the Finchley Road Station, and has many adventures before it reaches the Thames and the sea. It runs, I have been told, under the Bayswater Road into the Serpentine. At the bottom of the Serpentine it comes out again in a waterfall, where the rabbits are, and again runs underground to the King's garden at the back of Buckingham Palace, where it reappears as a beautiful lake. Then it dives under the Palace and

comes up again as the water in St. James's Park, where all the interesting water-fowl live and have nests on an island—the ducks and gulls and cormorants and penguins. Then, once more, it disappears, this time under the Horse Guards and Whitehall, and comes out into the Thames. Not a bad career for a little bit of a stream rising at Hampstead, is it?

To explore that stream would be fairly easy, and it is not difficult to explore the Thames. But in order to realize quite what Speke did you must think for a moment of what it means to travel in unexplored countries. There are no maps: you have no notion what is before you; the natives may be suspicious of you and make war at once, or they may at first pretend to be friendly and then suddenly attempt a massacre; fever is always on your track; wild beasts may be in such numbers as to be a continual danger. It is a great thing to dare all these known

and unknown perils just to do—what? To make a fortune? No. To add a country to England's possessions? No. But just to gain a little more knowledge of geography; just to add one more fact to the world's sum.

Illness came to both explorers, and they endured very severe privations, and at last Burton had to give up and allow Speke to go on alone. They parted at Kazé on July 9, 1858, just fifty years ago, Speke setting out with thirty-five native followers and supplies for six weeks. On August 3 he discovered a gigantic lake, to which he gave the name Victoria Nyanza—Victoria after his Queen, and Nyanza meaning a piece of water.

You should now get your atlas and look for the Nile and Kazé and the vast lake, where, as Speke then thought, and as is now known, the river Nile begins its course of three thousand four hundred miles, which does not end until, after pass-

ing through Khartoum, and Dongola, and Wady Halfa, and Assouan, and Thebes, and Ghizeh, and Cairo, it glides into the sea by the many mouths of its delta at Rosetta and Damietta and Alexandria.

Speke then returned to England, to tell his countrymen all about his discovery, and in 1860 he set out for Africa again, and began a series of very tedious and harassing marches from Zanzibar through Uganda to reach Victoria Nyanza once more, and explore it thoroughly. Illness again interrupted him, and the native kings were not wholly friendly, but at last, on July 28, 1862, he came to the head of the lake where the water that becomes the Nile tumbles over the edge of a cataract. This cataract he named Ripon Falls.

Speke telegraphed his news to England directly he reached a civilized town, so that when he himself landed at Southampton, in 1863, he was received as a hero, and honours were showered upon him, and he was the

most famous traveller of his own or almost any other day.

Not every one, however (including Burton), was satisfied that the Nile really began at Ripon Falls, and books were written by Burton and others in support of rival theories. Speke, who naturally believed himself to be right, arranged to meet some of these other geographers in a public discussion at Bath, in September, 1864; but on the very morning of that day, as he was out partridge-shooting, he accidentally shot himself and died at the early age of thirty-seven.

Isn't that a wretched way for a man to die after braving all the perils of unknown Africa?

And now, whenever you see the Speke monument again you will think of that great inland sea in Africa called Victoria Nyanza, and the Nile tumbling out of it and beginning its wonderful journey to the Mediterranean.



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A  
SHILLING



## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SHILLING

HAS it ever occurred to you through how many hands a piece of money passes in the course of a day, a week, a month, and what it does for its owners during that time? I am fortunately in the position to be able to tell you of the adventures of a shilling of my acquaintance during a single day ; and the story will show you how busy a piece of silver can be.

“ Let me see, you want an ordinary day,” the shilling said. “ Of course, sometimes I am not busy at all—I just lie all the time in a till or a drawer at the Bank (we hate being at the Bank on Sundays), or I may belong for the time being to a miser, or I may be locked up in a money-

box. (Children have no notion how irksome it is to an active intelligent coin to be put away in a dark money-box for weeks and weeks, with no recreation but an occasional rattle.) But I will tell you my adventures on a rather special day on which I not only went to church, but to a race-meeting, and was lost into the bargain. I was not busier then than I have been at other times, but I had rather more ups and downs than a day usually sees.

“When I woke it was quite light, and as I lay on the dressing-table with all the other coins the sunshine came through the chinks of the blind and made me pleasantly warm. Not so warm as I am in a pocket, but still very comfortable, especially as I had been cold in the night.

“It was a new room to me, and I was very glad to see it, or, indeed, to see anything again, since for nearly a year I had been locked up in a little girl’s money-box, with no one to talk to but a few low

pennies and a very rude little threepenny bit, who squeaked his impertinences into my ear all day long. Every now and then another penny would come tumbling in among us with a crash, sometimes bruising us horribly, but never any real gentlefolk, not even a sixpence. Luckily, however, this little girl's mother had the sense to have a birthday, and so at last I was taken out, to be exchanged at a flower-shop for a pot of musk.

"I lay in the flower-shop till for an hour or so, and then a nice-looking gentleman with grey hair came in for some pink carnations for a lady on Campden Hill, and I was given to him as change. He put me in his pocket, and there I remained till he came home, when I was placed on the dressing table with all the other coins.

"I was the only shilling, the others being a very old half-crown, quite deaf and short-tempered, a tired florin, some more vulgar pennies (pennies can be very coarse), and a

sovereign, who was too proud even to look at us and at once went to sleep.

“I don’t know what I should have done for company had it not been for a very affable silver-backed hair-brush on the table close to me, who told me one or two interesting stories of his youth and the grand people he used to see when he was lying in a Bond-Street window. He was in the midst of the romance of a very giddy tortoise-shell comb whom he had once loved, when the gentleman got up and began to brush his hair, and when he set the brush down again it was too far off for conversation. These are the little things that human beings do not think of, but which mean so much to us. We always like to be put close together according to our metal, gold near gold, silver near silver, and so on, and we like, also, to keep near our own values too—half-crowns near half-crowns, and pennies near pennies (although now and then I will

admit I have heard some very funny and enlightening things from copper, even from halfpennies, although it is true that they do drop their *h*'s and are often exceedingly unwashed).

“Well, to get on with my story : when the gentleman had finished dressing he put us all into his pockets again and went downstairs. Me he put in his left-hand trouser pocket with the half-crown and the florin; the pennies in his right, and the sovereign in his waistcoat. And here let me say that it is much more comfortable to be a man's money than a woman's. Men put us in their pockets and keep us cosy : women put us in purses, where we can hardly breathe.

“Directly after breakfast my gentleman hurried off to the Notting Hill Gate Tube station, and pushed me through a pigeon-hole to the ticket-seller, who laid me on the counter before him with a great many other coins all spread out. Before,

however, I could say anything more than just 'How do you do?' to them, I was taken up again and given in change to another traveller.

"This traveller had a little boy with him on his way back to school from Liverpool Street, and I very nearly passed into his possession as a tip, but just at the last moment the traveller thought better of it, and instead of giving the little boy a single shilling gave him half a crown (as all fathers and uncles ought to do at the very least), and so I went back into his pocket again.

"After the boy had gone I had a busy two hours in the city. I was first paid away to a 'bus conductor, and was given to him in change to a lady on her way to a special service at St. Paul's. I was there laid in a collection plate, which usually means a long rest for us; but happily one of the clergymen wanted a pound's worth of silver, and I had the luck to be among

it. He paid me to a cabman who took him to the Royal Academy, and by this cabman I was soon after given as change to a gentleman whom he drove from the Albany to Waterloo. This gentleman dropped me into a pocket full of money and settled down in the corner of a railway carriage to read the paper and smoke a cigar.

“ ‘Do you know where we are going ?’ said one of the other coins to me. ‘We are going to the races. We may have some fun.’

“ ‘This pleased me very much, for I had never been to the races in my life, but had heard much about them from time to time.

“ ‘Sometimes we make a lot of money for our master,’ the coin continued, ‘but sometimes he loses us for ever.’

“ ‘Yes,’ said a very fat five-shilling piece, who was hurting me horribly by the way he leaned against me, ‘but, of course,

you [meaning me] are too small to make any money. It is fellows like me, and sovereigns and half-sovereigns, that make the money.'

"None the less, as it happened, I made some too, although I had a dreadful shock for a moment when my master gave me to a man for a race-card, and I thought I should never have any fun at all. Luckily, however, the race-card man was thirsty, and I found my way into a till, and then I was given as change to a waiter, and soon after realized that I was in the till of the members' restaurant.

"There, for the first time in my life, I met a bank-note. The delicate, fragile thing ! She was very proud, but quite affable. We call them Duchesses. You should hear them rustle as they move ! They don't live with us, of course ; they live in leather cases in the more fashionable parts of the clothing, but now and then we find ourselves in the same plate at

restaurants, and I tell you it is a great moment for a shilling when that happens. How one's heart beats ! That was what occurred on this very occasion. I went out of the till in company with this beautiful, refined creature, and the gentleman to whom we were carried gave me back to the waiter as a tip.

“No sooner was lunch over than the waiter ran out on the course with me in his hand, and went up to a man who was standing on a box, and asked : ‘What price Flatiron ?’ and the man said, ‘Tens.’ Then the waiter handed me to the man, and he dropped me into a bag full of other money, both silver and gold, and gave the waiter a ticket.

“‘Who are you on ?’ the other coins asked me eagerly. I had no notion what they meant. ‘What is the name of your horse ?’ they said. This puzzled me even more, and I said I didn’t know any names of horses, but the waiter had asked about

a flatiron. 'That's it,' said the others; 'that's your horse.' And then I found that several others of them were there for Flatiron's sake too, while the others were for other horses, such as Saucy Sally, and Pink Pearl, and Rufus, and See-you-later.

"Every moment other coins came tumbling in, and then the race began. We could not see it, of course, but we could hear the cries of the crowd, and we rattled about in our excitement as the names of our own horses reached us. At last it was over, and we heard the man groan out that Flatiron had won. And very soon the waiter came for his winnings, and a half-sovereign and I were handed to him. I tell you I was proud to think that I had been the means of bringing one of those conceited half-sovereigns to life again, but he would not even say 'Thank you.'

"The waiter spat on both of us for luck, and put us in his pocket, and then went off





A BLUE RIBBON WAS THREADED THROUGH ME, AND I WAS  
HUNG ROUND A LITTLE GIRL'S NECK.

to a refreshment tent, where I was pushed across a wet counter and again dropped into a till, quite damp, but happily I was taken out again before I could catch cold, and given as change to the chauffeur of a motor-car.

“Almost immediately after that the chauffeur started his car and drove his master back to London. I could not see anything—a coin very rarely can—but I felt the vibration of the engine, and every now and then I heard the horn blow.

“The interesting part of the ride, however, was the talk I had with a shilling with a hole in it. ‘Whatever you do,’ he said, ‘don’t ever let them bore a hole in you. Life isn’t worth living after that. It’s not so much that it hurts as that no one will take you. I had a hole bored in me when I was quite new, and a blue ribbon was threaded through me, and I was hung round a little girl’s neck. That was all right, especially as we used to go to all

kinds of places together, even to the pantomime and "Peter Pan," and from where I used to hang I could see too; but one day, in a crowd in London, a thief with a pair of scissors cut the ribbon and pulled me off, and I have never been happy since. I have been in many persons' possession, but I see nothing of life, because I change hands only at night. When it is light the people won't have me. They call out, "Hi, this shilling won't do!" and push me back again. I can't buy anything by day at all, but at night I am slipped into cabmen's hands. It is very uncomfortable for me, for not only am I condemned to a kind of furtive, dishonest life, but I have to hear the dreadful things the cabmen say when they discover me.

"'There is only one worse thing,' he went on, 'and that is to be a bad shilling. But there aren't many of those made, because it doesn't pay to make false coins so small. The coiners spend their time on

bad half-crowns and florins, which cost hardly any more to make than a shilling and are worth ever so much more.'

"He went on to tell me of a bad half-crown that he once knew which was now nailed to the counter of a tobacconist's in Bermondsey. 'Think of it,' he said, 'nailed to a counter. Never able to move again : never able to buy another thing for ever and ever!' We both shuddered.

"Directly the car was in its garage the chauffeur hurried to his lodgings and changed his clothes and went out to enjoy himself. It was now about half-past six. He put his money into different pockets, and I found myself with half a crown and a florin. They were fairly sociable, especially when they knew I had won money at the races, but I had their company only a very short time, for suddenly I began to feel myself sinking. I cried out for help, but all in vain ; and in a moment I fell with a rush and knew

no more until I awoke to find myself in the mud of the street.

“There was a hole in the pocket !

“I lay there for a long time in an agony of fear that I should be run over. I heard the beat of horses’ feet close to me and the rumbling of wagons that shook the ground, and now and then a motor-car dashed by and turned me cold with fear. But as no harm came to me I realized that I must have fallen—I could not see for mud—very near the gutter ; perhaps quite in it.

“‘I do wish some one would pick me up,’ I thought, ‘but I don’t see how they can, for if I can’t see them for mud, they can’t see me for mud.’ Just as I was saying this to myself, I felt a great splash on my face, and then another and another. A shower, and a very heavy one, had begun. In spite of the wet this made me very happy, for I was gradually being washed clean, and ‘now,’ thought I, ‘I shall be seen.’

“It happened exactly as I guessed, for almost immediately afterwards a hand pounced down on me and picked me up, and I heard a man’s voice say, ‘Well, I’m blowed if it ain’t a bob!’ I almost screamed as he put me between his teeth and bit me. ‘And a good’un too,’ he added, and then addressing the woman with him, who was leading a little boy, he said: ‘Come on, old girl, and we’ll have some dinner after all,’ and we all went off to the nearest Lockhart’s refreshment-room and sat down at a table by the fire.

“‘What shall it be, missis?’ the man asked. ‘Two pots of splash for me and you, and three doorsteps and a mug of chalk for his nibs?’

“The woman said that would do nicely, and the man went off to get the things from the counter, and as he had to give me in payment that was the last I saw of him and his family; for which I was sorry, for they were nice kindly sort of people

although so poor. But I was able to see what he meant by his strange words, for he took back with him two cups of coffee, and three thick slices of bread and butter, and a mug of milk.

“Half an hour later I was given in change to a jolly navvy who was having an evening out with his girl. They had finished their supper and were now on their way to the circus. He held me in his hand until we got to the gallery door, and then I was pushed through a little grating and once again flung into a crowded till.

“There I felt I was doomed to stay for some time, for it was late and no one else was likely to come in. However, I did not mind much, for I was very tired and my head buzzed. ‘A shilling’s,’ I said to myself, as I lay there, ‘is a very disappointing life. Here am I lying in the till of a circus ticket-office and seeing nothing, while my late owner, who but for me

would not be at the circus at all, is having all the fun.' Where I lay I could faintly hear the band and the laughter. 'But for me,' I continued, 'why, but for me and other coins people couldn't do anything at all. It is we who give them their power. Just see what I have done this very day since I got up—I have bought tickets and food and drink and cab-rides for many people ; I have been put into the plate at church and I have won ten shillings at the races ; I have given pleasure and profit ; I have fed the hungry ; and I have just sent two worthy persons into the gallery of this circus. Not a bad day's work !'

"So saying I composed myself to sleep, but just at that moment one of the managers came round to ask for some change, and once again I was sent out into the world. The manager put on his hat and overcoat and started for home, giving me for his ticket at the station, where I passed out again as change to a gentleman

who was going to Notting Hill Gate, who put me in his pocket and did not take me out until he went to bed. And would you believe it? when I looked round I found I was on the very same dressing-table on which I had awakened in the morning, with my friend the silver-backed brush beside me.

“ ‘Then he didn’t spend you to-day?’ said the hair-brush, as soon as the man had gone to bed, and we could get a little time to ourselves.

“ ‘Oh, didn’t he?’ I exclaimed. ‘Why, I’ve been all over London, in all kinds of pockets to-day. I’ll tell you all about it.’

“ Which I did; so that you and the hair-brush are now equally wise.”

And there the shilling’s story ended.

But did it ever occur to you before what a traveller a coin can be, and that it is quite possible to get again at night the same coin you parted with in the morning?

THE RING OF FORTITUDE



## THE RING OF FORTITUDE

WHEN Priscilla had been a very good girl her mother allowed her as a special treat to play with her jewel-case. Of course Priscilla had to be very careful, which, indeed, she was by nature, having for the most part a place for everything, and everything in its place. She used to sit on the floor with the jewel-case before her, and take the rings and brooches and pendants and necklaces and bracelets and pins out one by one, and hold them up to the light and make them flash, and then put them on. There were diamonds and pearls, and a large opal in which you saw deep down in its milky depths little glints of burning crimson and dancing green. But of all the jewels Priscilla liked best a turquoise

ring, which her mother had ceased to wear. Priscilla would very much have liked this ring for her own ; but her mother did not care for little girls to wear rings at all, except—but that is what I am going to tell you.

One day, soon after Priscilla was eleven, she had a bad toothache. It grew no better as the time went on, although she rubbed the tooth with medicine which her mother sent for ; and afterwards she held a clove in her mouth, according to the advice of a charwoman who happened to be working in the house that day ; and then lay down with a piece of brown paper against her cheek, soaked in vinegar and then peppered, according to the advice of the cook ; and later sat close to the fire with the heat on the toothache side, according to the advice of the housemaid ; and finally sponged her cheek with almost boiling water, according to the advice of the nurse. Nothing did the tooth any

good. It ached most of the night, and the next morning poor Priscilla, with very red eyes, was led away to the dentist's by her nurse.

Of course directly she found herself on the terrible doorstep waiting for the horrible door to open, her toothache went away absolutely; but none the less she had to go into the waiting-room, and look at old *Punches* and old *Illustrated London Newses* for a long time until the dentist was ready, while fresh people came in and sat down with a sigh, including one old gentleman with a left cheek like the glass of a bull's-eye lantern; and then Priscilla's turn came and she went upstairs and for half an hour the dentist tortured her.

It was a tooth which, he said, must be saved and not extracted, and so he got out his little needles and his little looking-glass, and was exceedingly cruel—although by nature one of the kindest men living, who would not wittingly hurt a fly except

for its own good—as in the case of Priscilla. And when the half-hour was finished he had only just begun, and he told her to come again in four days' time and he would try and finish it.

“Will it hurt again then?” Priscilla asked.

“I'm afraid it will,” said the dentist.

Poor Priscilla! The tooth went on steadily grumbling with pain, and Priscilla's nerves were all upset, so that, although she was naturally brave, she could think of nothing but the next dreadful time, and as it drew nearer and nearer she broke down completely.

“I'm very sorry, mother,” she said, “but I really don't think I can,” and so saying she burst into sobs.

“If you will get on your things and come with me to the Stores,” said her mother, “I think I can help you.”

Priscilla brightened at once. She liked going to the Stores, not only because it

was exciting to buy things and be among so much to buy, but also because she was always interested in the fat commissioner with the dog-chains at the top of the steps, who knew all the dogs of Westminster intimately.

When they got to the Stores, and Smique had been chained up, Priscilla's mother led the way to the jewellery department, and, singling out one of the assistants, she said, "Is my ring done yet?"

"Yes," said he; "it has just come back." And he took out of a drawer a little box, and out of the box a ring, and handed it to Priscilla's mother. And Priscilla's mother handed it to Priscilla and said, "See if it fits, dear." And, behold! it was the turquoise-ring she had always loved so much, and, although it was rather loose, it fitted well enough for Priscilla to refuse to let the Stores have it again to alter it. In this decision she was supported by her mother, who said that

it should come back again after a day or two. And so the assistant gave Priscilla the little box, and off they went home.

On their way Priscilla's mother explained to Priscilla the value of the ring.

"It is for you to wear," she said, "only when you feel you want some extra help to enable you to bear up, as you do to-day. Let us call it the ring of fortitude, and every time you look down and see it, or feel it on your finger, you will remember what it means and why it is there, and that will give you courage. Why, you are much braver already."

And it is true that Priscilla was. She almost skipped along beside her mother, and all that day she fondled the ring and forgot all about her tooth and the dentist, even about the perfectly hateful buzzing thing that he drills holes with.

She had a good night, and went off to him in the morning almost smiling, and whether it was that the ring helped her not

to feel, or whether the dentist really did not hurt, I don't know, but it is certain that she had almost a pleasant sitting in his detestable chair.

In addition to the ring of fortitude, Priscilla had been given a shilling to buy some cakes for tea from a little shop off Regent Street that was famous in her family for a certain kind of scone. The dentist's man called a cab, and she and her nurse drove off very happily for the cakes and then all down Regent Street and through St. James's Park home.

It was upon hearing her mother's first words, "Was the ring good to you?" that Priscilla realized that she was no longer wearing it !

Her heart stood still.

She searched her gloves and her clothes and the bag with the cakes in it, and then she searched them again ; but to no purpose.

Priscilla was the most miserable child in

London. She would rather, she felt, have forty toothaches.

Directly after lunch, which she had the utmost difficulty in eating, she and her mother hurried off to the confectioner's to see if the ring was there ; but it was not.

Then they went off to Scotland Yard to describe it to the police and see if the cabman had by any chance found it and taken it there.

The Lost Property Office at Scotland Yard is divided into two parts, one for umbrellas and the other for miscellaneous things. Every day hundreds of persons seem to make a point of leaving something in a cab, and the doors of these offices are swinging continuously to let the losers in and out. A very nice policeman took down the particulars of the ring—what it was like, when and where Priscilla remembered seeing it last, the time she got into the cab and the time she left it, and so forth. Then he told them that if it

were brought in they should have a letter.

But the letter did not come, and day after day passed, and Priscilla grew so tired of looking at cabmen in the hope of seeing her own cabman again that she slept badly and became pale and nervous, for she dreamed every night of nothing but hansoms, not only in the streets, but indoors too, and even upstairs, driven by men without faces at all. And they never said anything to her, but just drove on and on, never stopping to pick up passengers or put them down. The world was full of cabmen, cabmen, cabmen. . . .

The doctor said that unless something happened to divert her mind Priscilla would be really ill.

But something did happen.

One evening, nearly a fortnight later, Priscilla's father was sitting by the fire reading a book he had bought at a book-

stall that afternoon. It was the life of an actor named Charles Mayne Young, who lived a hundred years ago, and it was full of odd and interesting things. Suddenly he said, "Listen to this," and read to Priscilla and her mother the following story, which was told to Mr. Young's son by a Brighton magistrate after dinner on Christmas Day, 1827 :

"Some few years ago, a gentleman, a bachelor, residing in lodgings on the first floor of a respectable but small house in this town, appeared before the bench of magistrates with a charge against the maid of his lodging of having robbed him of a ring.

"It appeared that he occupied the front drawing-room on the first floor and slept in the back ; that one night, having undressed by the drawing-room fire and wound up his watch, he deposited it, with his chain, two seals, and a ring attached to it, on the chimney-piece, and jumped into bed in the next room. In the morning, on dressing himself and going to the chimney-piece

for his watch, he discovered that the ring, which he valued, was gone. As he was in the habit of sleeping with the folding-doors between the rooms ajar, and was always a light sleeper, he felt confident that no one had entered the room since he had left it overnight except the maid, who had come in early, as usual, to dust and sweep the room and lay the table for breakfast. The servant was so neat in her person, so pretty, gentle, and well conducted, that he felt loath to tell her his suspicions; but the moral certainty he entertained of her guilt, and the great value he set on the ring, determined him to conquer his scruples. On hearing herself charged with the theft, she started and stared, as if doubting the evidence of her ears, indignantly denied the charge, burst into tears, and told her mistress that she would not remain another hour under her roof, for that her lodger had taxed her with dishonesty. The landlady espoused the cause of her maid, and used such strong language against her accuser, that his blood in turn was roused, and he resolved to bring the

matter to a determinate issue before the magistrates. My friend said he was on the bench, and that, prepossessed as he and his coadjutors were by the girl's looks and manners, they felt quite unable to resist the weight of circumstantial evidence produced against her, and never had a moment's hesitation in committing her for trial at the next assizes.

“ Five or six weeks after she had been in jail the prosecutor went into Shaw's, the pastry-cook's in the Old Steyne, for an ice. While he was pausing deliberately between each spoonful, the sun burst forth in all its strength, and darted one of its beams along the floor of the shop, bringing into light an object which glistened vividly between the joists of the flooring. He took out his penknife, inserted the point of it between the boards, and, to his utter amazement, fished up his lost ring. He ran back to his lodgings, and, on referring to his diary, he found that, on the evening of the very night on which he had left his watch and its appendages on the chimney-piece, he had been at Shaw's having some refreshment; and he conjectured

that, as half the split ring from which his seals hung had been for some time a good deal wrenched apart, it must have come into contact with the edge of the counter, and thus liberated the ring from its hold; that it had fallen on the ground, been trodden under the feet of some of the visitors to the shop, and in this way been wedged in between the boards of the flooring. Stung to the quick by self-reproach, at the thought of having tarnished the good name of an innocent girl by false accusation, and of having exposed her to the unmerited sufferings of prison life, he instantly took a post-chaise and drove off to the jail in which she was confined, asked every particular about her from the governor, and found him enthusiastic in his admiration of her, and utterly incredulous of her guilt. 'She's the gentlest, sweetest-tempered creature we have ever had within these walls, and nothing shall make me believe she is a thief,' said he. 'No more she is,' was the eager answer. 'She has been falsely charged by me, and I have come to make her every reparation in my power.' In one brief

word, he offered her his hand, and married her."

"There!" said Priscilla's father, when he had finished. "Why shouldn't our ring have fallen into a crack at the pastry-cook's in just the same way? You say it was a little bit loose, and Priscilla remembers taking off her glove in the shop. It's an old shop, isn't it?" he added.

"Yes," said Priscilla's mother, "very old."

"Then very likely there are wide cracks in the floor, or even holes?"

"Quite likely," said Priscilla's mother.

"Then I think I'll go at once and see." Priscilla's father was very impulsive, and when he thought of a thing he liked to do it.

"Oh, father, may I come too?" cried Priscilla.

"It will make you so late for bed," said her father.

"Only this once," Priscilla urged.

“And the shop will be shut,” said her mother.

“Oh, I’ll get them to let me in !” said her father.

“Do let me go, do !” said Priscilla. “I may, mayn’t I ?”

“Very well,” said her father ; “but you must wrap up very warm.”

So Priscilla’s father filled his pipe, and Maggie stood on the steps and blew twice, and soon a cab came, and off they bowled to the little street off Regent Street.

Priscilla’s mother was quite right. The shop was shut ; but Priscilla’s father hammered on the side door, and soon it was opened by a very little servant in a cap all on one side.

“Is Mr. Dear in ?” asked Priscilla’s father.

“No, he’s not,” said the very little servant.

“Is Mrs. Dear in ?” asked Priscilla’s father.

"There isn't a Mrs. Dear," said the very little servant.

"Then who is there?" asked Priscilla's father.

"There's Miss Dear," said the very little servant. "Mrs. Dear died years ago, on the day after the Diamond Jubilee."

"Is Miss Dear in?" asked Priscilla's father.

"No ; Mr. Dear and Miss Dear have both gone to Maskelyne and Devant's," said the very little servant, with a husky note in her voice that suggested she wished she was there too. "They have free seats," she added, quite unnecessarily, "for putting the bill in the window."

"Then there's no one at home but you?" said Priscilla's father.

"Only the bakers," said the very little servant, "but they're busy at the back."

"May I go into the shop for a minute?" said Priscilla's father.

"No, you mayn't," said the very little





"WILL YOU TELL ME WHAT MR. DEAR IS LIKE?"

servant very decidedly, half closing the door as she spoke, and Priscilla's father saw at once that it would be quite useless to try and get her to believe that he was not a thief.

"All right," he said; "don't be frightened. But will you tell me what Mr. Dear is like, because I am going to Maskelyne and Devant's to try and find him."

The very little servant, keeping the door nearly shut and speaking through the crack, was willing to sketch her master and mistress. Mr. Dear, she said, had white whiskers on each cheek and a pair of perfectly round spectacles. ("Like an owl," Priscilla thought.) And Miss Dear was wearing a hat with about half a pint of cherries on it, she should think. And they would be in the balcony.

So off went Priscilla and her father to Maskelyne and Devant's, and they had no difficulty in distinguishing Mr. and Miss

Dear, but as the performance was going on, it was some time before there was an interval in which they could be approached. Priscilla did not mind that at all, for the most wonderful things were happening on the stage, where people were appearing and disappearing at the word of command, and, no matter how carefully you watched them, the conjuror always turned out to be somebody else. And there was a Japanese juggler who climbed up a pole that was balanced on another Japanese juggler's shoulder.

When the interval came at last—all too soon—Priscilla's father squeezed along the seats and introduced himself to Mr. Dear, and Priscilla saw them talking very intently, and now and then they looked at her, and then her father beckoned to her to come, and she squeezed along too, and Mr. Dear and Miss Dear made room for her, and they all sat together for the rest of the performance, and Miss Dear offered

her a bag of sweets from time to time,  
with

O. W. DEAR,  
PASTRYCOOK AND CONFECTIONER,

printed on it. And all the time, no matter what was happening on the stage, Miss Dear was saying, "Well, there !" "Oh, dad, did you see that !" "Well I never !" And once, when Mr. Devant drew a rabbit out of a gentleman's collar, she cried, "Oh, actuality !"

And then "God save the King" was played, and they all trooped out into Regent Street, and Miss Dear and Priscilla followed Mr. Dear and Priscilla's father (who were talking about the Government) down to the shop. When the very little servant saw them all together her eyes grew twice as big as before. But her master told her to get them the key of the shop quickly, and while she was gone they all stood there in the narrow passage, surrounded by the smell of new

bread. Then Mr. Dear unlocked the door into the shop, and lit the gas, and then he fetched a candle, and Priscilla showed them where she was standing when she bought the cakes, and her father and Mr. Dear went down on their hands and knees and groped about very carefully, moving only a very few inches at a time.

"What about this hole?" said Priscilla's father at last.

"Yes," said Mr. Dear, "it is rather a big one. Can you see anything shine?"

Priscilla's father screwed his head down and twisted every way, while he held the candle so as to throw light into the blackness.

"No, I can't," he said. "But how about opening it up?"

"Lizzie," said Mr. Dear to his daughter, "run and get a hammer."

Miss Dear hurried off.

"And you, little Missie," said Mr. Dear to Priscilla, "you lift down that jar

at the end of the second row, and you'll find something nice to go on with while we're busy."

Priscilla found the jar and opened it, and it was full of chocolates with "hundreds and thousands" sprinkled on the top.

When Miss Dear returned with the hammer and the very little servant, Mr. Dear began to wrench up the board. It was very rotten, and came away easily, leaving plenty of room for his hand to grope about. Mr. Dear dipped into the black dust several times, and placed a heap on the floor each time, until the place was empty.

"Now," he said, "what shall we find?" And, placing the two candles close to the heap of dirt, he began to examine it, while Priscilla's father and Priscilla and Miss Dear and the very little servant all crouched down on the floor and looked on. Priscilla's heart beat like a motor-car standing still.

“ Bless my soul,” said Mr. Dear suddenly, “ if here isn’t half a sovereign ?”

“ Fancy that !” said Miss Dear.

“ Yes,” said Priscilla’s father, “ and here’s a halfpenny.”

“ Well, I never !” said Miss Dear.

“ Pins,” said Mr. Dear, “ by the hundred.”

“ And here’s a pencil,” said Priscilla’s father.

“ And—yes—no—yes—if it isn’t a ring ?” cried Mr. Dear, holding something up.

“ Oh, actuality !” said Miss Dear.

Priscilla seized it with a gasp of joy. “ It is !” she exclaimed. “ Yes, it is.”

It was the ring. Priscilla rubbed it clean, and the gold was as golden as ever, and the turquoise had the same darling blue.

“ Well,” said Mr. Dear, “ if that isn’t the queerest go ?”

Priscilla was so happy she nearly cried ;

and Miss Dear kissed Priscilla, and kissed dad, and the very little servant jumped about, and Mr. Dear kissed Miss Dear, and kissed Priscilla, and wrung Priscilla's father's hand. They both said, "What an extraordinary coincidence !" And Priscilla's father promised Mr. Dear a copy of the book as soon as he could get one, and Mr. Dear said it ought to be in the *Daily Mail*.

And then Priscilla and her father said "Good night" and "Thank you" several times, and at last got away and hurried home to relieve the mind of Priscilla's mother, who, as you may suppose, was wondering what had become of them.

That is only one story of the ring of fortitude. There are several others, which I may tell you at another time—how it comforted Priscilla in other times of need, and gave her strength, and how now and then she lent it to others, and it helped

them too. But if you are inclined to doubt such a strange coincidence as I have related, you have only to go into Mr. Dear's shop—O. W. Dear, Pastrycook and Confectioner—and just mention the topic of a lost ring, and he will not only tell you the whole story from beginning to end, but show you the Life of Young, and also the crack in the floor; and Miss Dear will bear him out.

But don't forget to buy a teacake, for he makes the best in London.

THE END

CENTRAL CIRCULATION  
CHILDREN'S ROOM

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY  
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